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TITLE OF THESIS....Metamorphosis in A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Tempest.....

.....

UNIVERSITY...of ALBERTA.....

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED.....M.A.....

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED....1973.....

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

METAMORPHOSIS IN A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM AND THE TEMPEST

by

(C) PETER RALPH FRIESEN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1973

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest are stories of metamorphosis. Individuals are transformed and their transformation makes for a renewed society. Out of chaos emerges form, harmony, symmetry. In A Midsummer Night's Dream the chaos of the night in the wood becomes the symmetry of wedding couples; in The Tempest the appetite of a group of plotters is blunted, while general forgiveness is extended in a Fifth Act reconciliation scene.

The outline of the metamorphic process is this: 1) false order, that must yield to 2) disintegration, until the result is 3) chaos, out of which 4) an integration occurs that culminates in 5) a true order--but this renewed order contains a seed of destruction, thus making the whole design cyclical.

Love (Amor; compassion) and Art (ritual, music, ceremony, dance) are the agents of metamorphosis. The emphasis is upon love in A Midsummer Night's Dream and art in The Tempest. In each play, but especially in The Tempest, the metamorphic process is incomplete, leaving an element of chaos untransformed.

Each play presents a myth of the imagination (which resides chiefly in love and art), the validity of

which is tested against the imagination's capacity to metamorphose the stuff of life. The conclusion of this test is ambivalent: imagination changes everything, yet everything reverts to what it was. The myth both vindicates and mocks the imagination's power and appeals to the audience, through such devices as the play within the play, the "all the world's a stage" metaphor, and the epilogue, for judgment upon the myth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	METAMORPHOSIS AND MYTHOPOESIS	1
II	CHAOS AND DESIGN	10
	Spenser	11
	Montaigne	15
	Cervantes	19
III	"THIS THING OF DARKNESS": SHAKESPEARE'S PICTURE OF CHAOS	26
	A Midsummer Night's Dream	30
	The Tempest	39
IV	THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE	49
	A Midsummer Night's Dream	51
	The Tempest	61
V	THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF ART	70
	A Midsummer Night's Dream	73
	The Tempest	80
VI	"THE POET'S EYE": SHAKESPEARE'S MYTH OF THE IMAGINATION	103
	A Midsummer Night's Dream	110
	The Tempest	118
	Spenser, Montaigne, Cervantes	129
	***	
FOOTNOTES	. . . . .	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	. . . . .	141

CHAPTER I

METAMORPHOSIS AND MYTHOPOESIS

No art form imitates life so nearly as the theater: on the stage, as in life itself, people fight, love, eat and sleep, and the present moment melts into the past, uncontained. Inevitably, the idea that the stage is a little world within the larger world of real life suggests itself; although it is apparent that the play-world is, as Maynard Mack says, "unlike our own in being perfectly, or almost perfectly, significant and coherent."[1] But within this significant and coherent play world a wide range of action and character is possible, depending on the rules the playwright decides to obey. Each play has certain underlying assumptions, and, ideally, the action is consistent with these.

Shakespeare developed a psychological realism on the Elizabethan stage that went much beyond what had been previously accomplished; at the same time, however, many of his plays contain a supernatural element. Two of his plays, A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest, are unlike any of the others in their apparent indulgence in fantasy: in the first, fairies have as much right to the stage as human beings; in the second, a spirit performs magical tricks for his human master. The

two plays are separated in time of composition (A Midsummer Night's Dream, c. 1595; The Tempest, 1611) and in genre (the first a romantic comedy; the second a romance or tragicomedy), and there are many differences between them, but they are alike in that both assume a world in which nature is magically controlled. The respective personifications of magical nature are Puck and Ariel, a "knavish sprite" and an "airy spirit," both of whom can take on any shape they choose, from milk stools to St. Elmo's fire.

This metamorphic power immediately calls to mind that book which Shakespeare so frequently went to when he needed an idea--Ovid's Metamorphoses. Ovid's theme is what his title says it is: "Of shapes transformde to bodies straunge," as his Elizabethan translator, Arthur Golding, rendered it.[2] Both A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest contain action or poetry showing the direct influence of the Metamorphoses (the story of Pyramus and Thisbe; Prospero's speech beginning "Ye elves of hills"), but more important, Shakespeare adopts Ovid's theme. Thus Bottom is "translated" into an ass, and Gonzalo finds that his clothes, instead of having been ruined by immersion in the sea, are fresher than before. Such changes can only occur in a mythic world.

Shakespeare deliberately puts on a mask of naivete in these plays, presenting a world similar to that which Ernst Cassirer sees as characteristic of the

primitive mind, a world in which the theme of metamorphosis is central:

> There is no specific difference between the various realms of life. Nothing has a definite, invariable, static shape. By a sudden metamorphosis everything may be turned into everything. If there is any characteristic outstanding feature of the mythical world, any law by which it is governed--it is this law of metamorphosis.[3]

The literary imitation of myth and mythical principles is mythopoesis. In A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest Shakespeare is a mythopoeic poet whose imaginary world imitates the operations of a mythic world. It is these shared assumptions of myth and imagination that are more important than references to specific characters from mythology, like Theseus, who is more solidly human than anyone else in A Midsummer Night's Dream. In Shakespeare's mythopoesis, as in myth, the world is governed by the law of metamorphosis. This is true even in the structure of these plays, which follows a natural (and mythic) cycle of life, death, and re-birth.

At this point a distinction between two kinds of change should be made. The changes in Ovid's stories are occasionally psychologically significant, as when the frightened Daphne is transformed into a trembling laurel, and sometimes their effect may be, as one critic says, "the calming of strife in the harmony of art and melody."[4] But there is also a violence and discord accompanying these changes, not only because bloody passion is often their catalyst (as in the story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela), but also because there

is an implied terror in identity-loss. Ovid imagines chaos as the warring of the elements, that which has no form taking on form; but this is not far from the metamorphoses he depicts, in which there is no stability, one form constantly and arbitrarily changing into another. A sense of the ultimate significance of all this change is missing.

This apparently chaotic alteration of forms occurs in A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest as well, particularly when Puck and Ariel appear to mortals in various shapes. Yet in the Shakespearean plays there is a controlling influence that limits the events and shapes them according to an over-all design. This is the second kind of change, perhaps more properly called metamorphosis than the other, since here each event grows organically and necessarily out of the one preceding it. In each of the plays this metamorphosis, proceeding from apparent chaos to actual harmony, is brought about by a kind of on-stage director who watches his "play" from a slight distance that gives him an over-view superior to everyone's except that of the audience and Shakespeare himself. On this level it is Oberon and Prospero who are the first causes of metamorphosis; on a still higher level of awareness it is of course Shakespeare's unifying imagination which, with the audience's help, transforms experience into art. And here, too, there is myth: these plays form a highly

conscious myth of the imagination; in them Shakespeare explores the possibilities and limitations of the drama form.

Despite the fairies, the magic, the transformations, however, Shakespeare is not purely mythopoeic even in these plays, and he maintains a strong historical and psychological sense. The fairies of A Midsummer Night's Dream, for example, are at times more than faintly ridiculous;[5] Antonio and Sebastian in The Tempest are only too real. Myth can be laughable, or even irrelevant. C. L. Barber observes that Shakespeare

> . . . wrote at a moment when the educated part of society was modifying a ceremonial, ritualistic conception of human life to create a historical, psychological perception. His drama, indeed, was an important agency in this transformation: it provided a "theater" where the failures of ceremony could be looked at in a place apart and understood as history; it provided new ways of representing relations between language and action so as to express personality. . . . [H]is comedy presents holiday magic as imagination, games as expressive gestures.[6]

Oppositions are set up: ceremony and ritual versus history and psychology, magic versus imagination, games versus plays. In the two plays under discussion Shakespeare shows awareness of these differences, but he manages to present them in such a way that they are mostly resolved. A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest are both mythic and realistic; the distinction is largely, though not wholly, broken down through mythopoesis, which is myth-making that is conscious of history and individuality. Theseus' famous speech beginning Act V

of A Midsummer Night's Dream, though intended by him to be skeptical, can be read with this double attitude in mind. His analysis of imagination is not as derogatory as he seems to think.

> The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold:
> That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
> The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
> Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.[7]

The common quality linking madman, lover and poet is imagination, or (a term that is practically interchangeable in Elizabethan English) fantasy. Imagination, according to Theseus, sees not what is there, but what it wants to see, what it wishes were there. It distorts reality, and so is laughable. Theseus makes no distinction between madness, the ecstasy of courtly love, and the inspiration of the poet. He sees, quite rightly, that the imagination's main function is to turn things into shapes, to metamorphose what is there into something new. But he fails to acknowledge the power imagination exerts over reality.

The three types Theseus isolates as particularly susceptible to the imagination provide a useful division of categories in discussing metamorphosis, both in A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest. The poet, rightly last on the list, encompasses the other two, he can

create madmen and lovers as he will--Theseus himself, for that matter, owes his existence to the poet. The poet makes the metamorphic design. In A Midsummer Night's Dream the character closest to this omnipotence is Oberon; in The Tempest it is Prospero. Within the plays, these characters artfully manipulate others, who are then driven to be mad, or to love; and it becomes apparent that, given the ending of each play, madness and love must come before. The particular changes they bring about become essential to the larger change that is going on.

This larger metamorphic design of the imagination can be outlined as follows: 1) false order, that must yield to 2) disintegration, until the result is 3) chaos, out of which 4) an integration occurs that culminates in 5) a true order--but this renewed order contains a seed of destruction, thus making the whole design cyclical. It is a design which works upon both individuals and society in general. Structurally, it follows the natural cycle of life, death, and re-birth, as well as the pattern which critics like Northrop Frye and C. L. Barber discover in the comic genre as such, in which a rigid, conventional society is disturbed by break-away lovers or a Lord of Misrule, and then revitalized in a new harmony, a movement through release to clarification.[8] Thus arbitrary change, characterized by madness and the passions of lovers, is incorporated into the middle phase of a

meaningful process.

Even the urbane and unruffled Ovid seeks for some principle of unity amidst diversity. In the last book of the Metamorphoses his philosopher stands back from the immediacy of all the stories of transformation, and finds an underlying unity:

> And though that varyably
> Things passe perchaunce from place to place: yit
> all from whence they came
> Returning, do unperrisshed continew still the same.
> (XV.282-284)

Thus, when seen aright, the many is One, in defiance of the classical principles of logic: identity, contradiction, and the excluded middle. This was to become one of the mysteries of Renaissance neoplatonism.[9] There is another kind of singleness emerging from the hundreds of changes recorded in Ovid's great poem: the lasting fame of the poet himself, surviving mutability:

> Yit shall the better part of mee assured bee to
> clyme
> Aloft above the starry skye. And all the world
> shall never
> Be able for to quench my name.
> (XV.989-991)

Out of the confusion of random change Ovid rescues some fixity through the principle of the One in the many, and the idea of lasting fame achieved through art. These solutions, or variations of them are taken up by Shakespeare and his contemporaries as well.

I have already given an outline of the meta-

morphic design in A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest. This design attempts to overcome mutability or chaos, but at the same time it breaks down excessive rigidity through an excursion into madness, dream, love's passion, and the imaginings of the poet. A similar double intent is evident in other great writers of Shakespeare's time, although the methods of carrying it out vary. Of the three writers that are briefly discussed in this paper, Spenser, Montaigne and Cervantes, the last is closest to constructing a myth of the imagination as Shakespeare does.

CHAPTER II

CHAOS AND DESIGN

In his book The Counter-Renaissance Hiram Haydn sees the Renaissance as essentially a continuation of the medieval tradition, especially in the calm and even-tempered Christian-humanistic views of thinkers like Richard Hooker or poets like George Chapman. But also at this time (the sixteenth century) there are writers who form what Haydn calls the Counter-Renaissance, whose tone is sometimes cynical and despairing, in opposition to and even rebellion against Christian-humanistic faith in reason and progress. These writers, men like Walter Raleigh, Philip Sidney, John Donne and even Francis Bacon, seem split between the exhilaration of a new freedom in thought and action and a despairing sense that their world is being destroyed; they dream in turn of infinite power and of the end of the world. Haydn sees the Counter-Renaissance as an age of transition between the confident and secure world-views of the Middle Ages and the Newtonian Age of Reason.[1]

The conditions of the Counter-Renaissance were such that a writer of this era was almost forced to deal with the theme of change. Most retained some faith in the orthodox cosmic order, but they also saw the spectre of

that order's dissolution; that is, the coming of chaos. In The Elizabethan World Picture E. M. W. Tillyard says that Edmund Spenser saw the cosmic order primarily threatened by mutability, the ravages of time, while Shakespeare saw the threat in terms of chaos, the confusion of degree or hierarchy.[2] But chaos means a primal cosmic anarchy, and as such it is the more inclusive term, since mutability moves toward the reduction of all form to formlessness or original un-being. Thus, since both confusion of degree and the process of decay are characterized by changefulness and the dissolution of form, I shall use "chaos" as an inclusive term for both.

Different writers make different responses to the phenomenon of change: some offer Christian or neoplatonist solutions, some a stoic steadfastness, others a belief in the eternal value of art. Sometimes the myth of the Golden Age is counterposed to chaos. The most common response is that of a kind of metempsychosis in which the soul or spirit is eternal and changeless; only the body which it occupies is subject to deformity. Even Ovid, whose writing is exceptionally sensual, relies on this argument of the One immanent in the many. In itself this argument suggests unity, but not necessarily design; a Christian poet like Spenser goes so far as to say that mutability is necessary, a part of God's design.

Spenser

For Spenser, mutability is the result of the Fall,

and is contrary to the laws of the first, incorruptible Nature created by God in the Garden of Eden. In his Mutabilitie Cantos Spenser personifies the phenomenon of change in the Titaness Mutabilitie, who aspires to supreme power, not only over men, but over the gods as well. She has already succeeded in perverting Nature's law and bringing death into the world, and now seeks to overthrow the Moon, beyond whose sphere, according to the Elizabethan world picture, there could be no corruption. Her assault on the Moon is interrupted by Hermes, but, never daunted, she enters the court of Jove himself, where all the gods are impressed by her beauty. In allegorical terms, Spenser poses the possibility of the collapse of the orderly cosmos which the Elizabethans had inherited from the Middle Ages and then refined upon.

Eventually Mutabilitie is allowed to appear before great dame Nature herself. C. S. Lewis believes that the gods represent the laws of the phenomenonal universe, while Nature, taken apart, is the ground of this universe.[3] Within the logic of the poem it is apparent that the principle of that original Nature which was perverted on earth remains intact in heaven. The evidence which Mutabilitie presents for her case (that she should rule the gods) is substantial: she presents a pageant of the passing seasons, the months of the year, the day and night, the hours, and finally life and death, all pointing to the conclusion that "Time on all doth pray."[4] She also

argues that the four elements which make up life are subject to change, and war among each other, even though the gods supposedly control them. More tellingly, the gods themselves are "mortall borne" (VII.54) and are ever changing their aspects or wandering from their spheres. Her conclusion, that since all things are "tost and turned by transverse" (VII.56) she should be allowed to rule the gods, seems justified by the strong case she has made for herself.

But Nature repudiates Mutabilitie, in a rather brief reply which in fact does not so much refute Mutabilitie's argument as transcend it. The reply is two-fold, a philosophical point coming first and a religious one second. Nature admits that while "all things sted-fastnes doe hate"

> . . . yet being rightly wayd
> They are not changed from their first estate;
> But by their change their being doe dilate:
> And turning to themselves at length again,
> Doe worke their owne perfection so by fate:
> Then over them Change doth not rule and raigne;
> But they raigne over change, and doe their states maintaine.
>
> (VII.58)

This is a variation on Ovid's principle of the One in the many, a kind of general principle of form underlying all the particular changes. Spenser elaborates this point to include the idea of dilation of being; things which change not only return to their true form over and over again, but in doing so they live more fully. It is

a question of gaining proper perspective so that phenomena may be "rightly wayd." Thus, even in the present world, Mutabilitie's power is more apparent then real. But there is also the world to come, an eternal realm ushered in on the resurrection day:

> But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
> And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see.
> (VII.59)

In the beginning of the eighth canto, which, unfinished as it is, constitutes an appropriate conclusion to the Mutabilitie Cantos, Spenser expands Nature's last point, admitting that the immediacy of the experience of change and death in this life makes the philosophical reply inadequate. Thus

> . . . all shall rest eternally
> With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
> O! that great Sabbaoth God, grant me that Sabaoths sight.
> (VIII.2)

This conclusion has been hinted at earlier in the comparison of Nature's garments to the garments of the transfigured Christ on Mount Tabor (VII.7). The final response to changefulness is a divine metamorphosis into the eternal, for the individual, society, and nature.

The story of the foolish god Faunus and his passion for Diana's nymph Molanna which appears as an interlude in Canto VI imitates the pattern of the larger poem; Faunus, like Mutabilitie, aspires to a position not

rightfully his, and is punished for it. It is noteworthy that a connection between erotic desire and changefulness arises here, as it does at the end of Mutabilitie's pageant, where Life "was like a faire young lusty boy, / Such as they faine Dan Cupid to have beene " (VII.46). For Mutabilitie, life is desire, which is characterized by instability and devotion to the mortal body.

Montaigne

Spenser's solution to the problem of mutability or chaos (which is at bottom the problem of death) is in keeping with a medieval world-view similar to that of Chaucer's in Troilus and Criseyde, where we are given the perspective of eternity, Troilus in the Seventh Heaven laughing at the foolishness of his earthly love in comparison with the divine love he now knows--although Spenser is less sure of this perspective than is Chaucer. In Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) the whole cosmic order, earthly and heavenly both, is mainly ignored. Even in modern times such resolute relativism is uncommon. Near the end of "An Apologie of Raymond Sebond" Montaigne distils the theme of variety, incertitude, multiplicity and changefulness that permeates the Essays into several paragraphs that declare both the impossibility of true knowledge, and the absolute state of flux existing in the universe. First he says that "nothing comes unto us but falsified and altered by our senses,"[5] and since we judge by appearances only, we consequently judge falsely. He

continues:

> In few, there is no constant existence, neither of our being, nor of the objects. And we, and our judgement, and all mortall things else do uncessantly rowle, turne, and passe away. Thus can nothing be certainely established, nor of the one, nor of the other; both the judgeing and the judged being in continuall alteration and motion. We have no communication with being; for every humane nature is ever of it selfe but an obscure apparance and shadow, and an uncertaine and weake opinion. (545)

The phrase "we have no communication with being" indicates that Montaigne is here interested in ontological or essential truth, as well as in the everyday distinctions between what is real and what is apparent. But essential truth is the foundation even for tentative earthly knowledge, and when the first vanishes, so must the second.

The odd thing about Montaigne is his equanimity, which he never loses, no matter how he devastates the assumptions of the nature of man prevailing in his time. He is a moderate, balanced iconoclast, appealing to Classic thinkers for support, but mistrusting conventional wisdom, always maintaining a mocking distance from his subject matter (which, as he says, is primarily himself). His values seem close to the ideals of the Golden Rule, the Aristotelian mean, Platonic temperance, and the principle of <u>decorum</u> which Hiram Haydn sees as typical of the Christian humanists in the Renaissance;[6] but he is rather a natural humanist who finds that nature, with a small "n," teaches that neither the body nor the mind should follow its appetites to excess.

But what constant lessons can be learned, even from nature, where there is no constant existence? The world which Montaigne studies cannot be fixed; "it goeth so unquietly and staggering, with a naturall drunkennesse" (725). Montaigne's solution to this problem is perhaps implicit in his own strong, detached personality, but he is pressed to offer something more--and, un-Christian as his view normally is, he nevertheless gives an apparently Christian answer. Though the natural world is ultimately chaotic, God is eternal, existing outside of time and change in an everlasting Now, and in a state of pure Being: "there is nothing that truly is, but he alone" (547). It is from this viewpoint that Montaigne reproves Raymond Seybond for wishing to raise himself above humanity, since this only shows foolish presumption:

> He shall raise himselfe up, if it please God extraordinarily to lend him his helping hand. He may elevate himselfe by forsaking and renouncing his owne meanes, and suffering himselfe to be elevated and raised by heavenly meanes. It is for our Christian faith, not for his Stoicke vertue to pretend or aspire to this divine Metamorphosis, or miraculous transmutation. (547)

Unlike Spenser, Montaigne is not concerned to discover a unifying principle in the midst of change; but like the English poet he posits an eternal world beyond the natural one in which change shall be no more, in which individuals will leave their mortal, corruptible bodies for heavenly, resurrected ones.

Yet it is debatable whether such is truly Montaigne's conclusion. Given the weight of argument in

this essay and in the others, this Christian idea seems out of proportion and contrary to what is said elsewhere. And it is not upon the actual "divine Metamorphosis" that Montaigne places emphasis, but rather upon human folly, which falls exactly into line with his general theme. Montaigne knows his Scripture, but he is a long way off from St. Paul, who believed that Christ

> . . . shal change our vile bodie, that it may be facioned like unto his glorious bodie, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto him self.

Montaigne gives no sign of noticing a divine "working," or design through which man and nature shall be redeemed through Christ's power. He is, rather, satisfied to accept himself as he is--and for this same reason mistrusts ecstasy of any kind: "The worst estate of man, is where he loseth the knowledge and government of himselfe" (299). The yearning to escape the mutable world and one's own inconstant humanity Montaigne finds worthy of mockery; such a yearning implies only that we do not understand our condition. His common sense is almost as insistent as that of Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and like Bottom, he does not aspire to any heights of divine glory: "And sit we upon the highest throne of the World, yet sit we upon our owne taile" (1013). Contrast Spenser's neoplatonic goddess Venus in An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, whom the poet begs to "recure my harts long pyning griefe, / And shew what wondrous powre your beauty hath, / That can restore a damned wight from death"

(285-287).

More of a kindred spirit to Montaigne is John Harington, for whom the theme of metamorphosis is a convenient excuse to exercise his comic and satiric wit. His The Metamorphosis of Ajax (1596) puns on Ajax as "a jakes"--that is, privy. The reduction of mythical hero to repository for excrement is perhaps the best example of the undercutting of the Renaissance's new sense of man's divine possibilities that can be found. Montaigne's insight that "we sit upon our owne taile" is here presented in its extreme.

Cervantes

The varying degrees of solemnity in the attitudes which Spenser and Montaigne take toward the theme of the metamorphosis of the base into the heavenly are all found in Cervantes' Don Quixote, first published in 1605. The many transformations in the novel do not occur according to a pattern by which the changeful world gives way to a more perfect realm; rather, a stable world is subjected to the chaotic imagination of a gentleman gone mad from over-indulgences in romances. Nevertheless, the romances themselves, such as Amadis of Gaul or Cervantes' own Galatea, were popular in sixteenth-century Spain, revealing a wide-spread nostalgia for a more coherent world than that of the Renaissance. Cervantes both exploits this nostalgia and laughs at it; Don Quixote is both hero and fool. Two opposed realms of consciousness are presented,

each equally sure of its validity: there is the real world of common sense, inhabited by such level heads as Sancho Panza; and there is the world of chivalry and romance, where Don Quixote dwells alone. Since the gentleman-knight is so outnumbered, and since the author tells us he is mad, the reader's initial reaction is to accept the literal sense as the only sense--everybody knows that windmills are only windmills and that giants do not even exist. But certain traits in Don Quixote's personality soon begin to establish a definite validity for his chivalrous world: his spirit, especially, is superior to anyone else's, and his courage and sense of honor are genuine. Thus, while the world with which Don Quixote is in conflict is more real--that is, solid, stable--than the world of romance, the romance world is not thereby rendered totally invalid. In fact, as incorporated in Don Quixote, it is in some ways superior.

In terms of the novel and its context this double attitude may be stated as follows. The attempt imaginatively to transform the flux of history into the permanence of romance is foolish escapism; on the other hand even a foolish imagination is spiritually superior to none. Two things are at stake here: the value of imagination itself, which transforms the world according to the wishes of its owner; and the value of romance, whose principles make up the underlying unity of the imagination's metamorphoses.

In one of the prefatory verses to Don Quixote Cervantes refers to himself as the "Spanish Ovid,"[8] apparently in reference to the many transformations that occur in his book. But whereas Ovid's Metamorphoses connects human and natural worlds, Cervantes' book connects one figure with an artificial world of his own making. The initial transformation, setting off all the others, is that of Don Quixote's mind. Through reading romances he changes from a staid country gentleman to a knight-errant, and his knight-errant's mind in turn transforms the whole world: "all our adventurer saw, thought, or imagined seemed to happen in accordance with what he had read in his books of chivalry" (64).

Don Quixote's imagination is astonishingly resilient. Though the design that he tries to impose upon life is contradicted at every point, he manages to believe in that design implicitly, until the very end of his life, which is necessarily the end of the novel as well. In the famous adventure of the windmills, the good knight fearlessly charges against the thirty or forty windmills, which he believes to be giants, despite Sancho Panza's warning that they are truly windmills. He and his horse are thrown to the ground, badly bruised, and in the face of this defeat Don Quixote makes a marvelous rationalization: an imagined magician named Freston has changed the giants into windmills to rob the knight of his victory. This rationalization is Don Quixote's means of holding his illusion together; whatever is so obstinate as not to

fit into the illusion can be blamed on magicians or enchanters of evil intent. The best articulation of this perennial excuse is in Don Quixote's reply to Sancho after the squire has tried to convince the knight that the object which Don Quixote thinks is Mambrino's helmet is in fact only a dented barber's basin in which Sancho intends to soap his beard. Don Quixote is indignant at his squire's ignorance:

> "you have the shallowest understanding that any squire has or ever had in the whole world. Is it possible that in the time you have been with me you have not yet found out that all the adventures of a knight-errant appear to be illusion, follies, and dreams, and turn out to be the reverse? Not because things are really so, but because in our midst there is a host of enchanters, forever changing, disguising, and transforming our affairs as they please, according to whether they wish to favor or destroy us." (243)

It is the hard reality of drubbings and stonings in which so many of his adventures culminate that forces Don Quixote to invent these enchanters--but it is also the fact that his mind alternates between madness and sanity. If he were always quite mad his illusion would be constant, windmills would always be giants or some other objects befitting a romantic world; but since his mind often sees the world as it is he accounts for the differences by his idea of magical transformations. It does not occur to him that his own mind transforms the world at a primary level, or that the "enchanters'" transformations are really projections of his own.

Cervantes tells us at the beginning that Don Quixote's adventures originate from an over-active

imagination. His adventures show him to be both foolish and heroic; correspondingly his imagination is both a plague and a blessing, resulting in chaotic events which Don Quixote nevertheless interprets from a transcendent point of view. Don Quixote is both a confirmation and denial of the idea that humanity can transcend itself; although he is transformed to a higher state of being he still remains all too human.

Is the imagination the seat of madness or of inspiration? When Cervantes theorizes on this matter, he takes the conventional point of view, which is that artistic creation is the imitation of nature--nature being certain principles of harmony and unity in space and time, rather than the confusion of experience. It is this imitative faculty, corresponding to the reason rather than imagination, which the artist employs. Presumably the higher nature which the artist imitates is self-evident to everyone as being implicit in reality; thus the artist imitates a world that is understood to be already there, instead of creating a new world.

Such a view is sensible so long as there is a commonly held assumption that the higher level of nature, Spenser's goddess, is immanent in the lower, fallen level of nature. When the sense that higher nature's laws are absolute and knowable begins to fade, the artist begins to see himself as an innovator rather than imitator; he transforms the world according to his

imaginative vision, something like Don Quixote. Cervantes' art in this point contradicts his theory, if we may believe that his novel is a kind of spiritual autobiography.

The three writers discussed in this chapter all have in common a fascination with the subject of change accompanied by a need to discover an order amidst or beyond change. Spenser and Montaigne tear at the assumptions of the old world order, Cervantes mocks it, yet all revert to it in some way. Spenser's Mutabilitie is almost heroic in her attempt to conquer the heavens; Milton might have been thinking of her when he created his magnificent Satan. Montaigne delights in showing that the world is not so neat as smug mankind would have it be, and that the assumed permanence of Nature is really the capriciousness of custom. Similarly Cervantes attacks the fabric out of which books of chivalry are woven by forcing romantic ideals into confrontation with ordinary life's limitations.

Spenser and Montaigne (the first with much more conviction than the latter) both reply to the thesis of chaos with the antithesis of metamorphosis into a heavenly state of being like that expounded by St. Paul in the New Testament, who anticipates death followed by resurrection into a glorified body free from corruption. Chaos is thus absorbed into God's design. In Don Quixote, however, the whole world is transformed by the imagination

of one man, whose obsessions with certain ideals make, in his own mind, a kind of permanence. His world is subject to a set of formalities based on the "scripture" of books of chivalry. This imaginative transformation of the world is both a success and a failure.

Shakespeare, like the other great writers of the late Renaissance, breaks down old orders and tries to make a new one, and, like them, finds that the attempted transformation of chaos into design does not altogether complete itself. Both man's design and Providence's are seen to be open-ended; there is an element of chaos that no imagination, divine or human, seems able to transform.

CHAPTER III

"THIS THING OF DARKNESS": SHAKESPEARE'S PICTURE OF CHAOS

Dedicated to an ideal of order though he might be, Shakespeare throughout his writing displays a fascination with the theme of chaos. This is apparent even in Ulysses' well-known discourse in Troilus and Cressida:

> Degree being vizarded,
> Th' unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
> The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
> Observe degree, priority, and place,
> Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
> Office, and custom, in all line of order. . . .
> . . . . . .
> But when the planets
> In evil mixture to disorder wander,
> What plagues and what portents, what mutiny,
> What raging of the sea, shaking of earth,
> Commotion in the winds! Frights, changes, horrors
> Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
> The unity and married calm of states
> Quite from their fixure! O, when degree is shak'd,
> Which is the ladder to all high designs,
> Then enterprise is sick!
> . . . . . .
> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark what discord follows!
> . . . . . .
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite;
> And appetite, an universal wolf,
> So doubly seconded with will and power,
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And last eat up himself.
> (I.iii.83-124)

In this speech the imagery of disorder far outweighs that of order, the principles of degree, proportion, and form

are negatively defined in terms of their opposite, chaos (in emphasis at least). Chaos, although it comes to exist only in the absence of degree, is almost a positive principle on its own, powerful enough to consume the world. Appetite, "an universal wolf," is the chief characteristic of chaos; it is excessive passion, as in the case of Othello, or it may even be excessive intellect, as in Iago or Richard III--but it is always excessive. In the individual, appetite implies a selfish drive toward supremacy; the man of appetite is not content with his station in life or place in society, he seeks a kind of transcendence toward a state of being in which the self is no longer defined in relation to society. This abandonment to appetite and scorn of cosmic and social orders generally leads the individual to a sense of his own inadequacy and life's emptiness. Macbeth is a good example.

Even nature apart from man sometimes manifests a wolfish appetite, since nature is subject to mutability, which ends in death. In the sonnets, Time often appears personified as a reaper, but occasionally also as a beast of appetite: "Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws / And make the earth devour her own sweet brood" (XIX); or else Death is similarly depicted: "Death, that feeds on men" (CLXVI). But more often, as in Timon of Athens or Titus Andronicus, appetite is a destructive human quality--if beastly man may appropriately be called

"human."

Both nature and his own perverse will make up the personified chaos that is Richard III, who interprets his bodily deformity as an excuse for crimes against the state. It is obvious that nature has not intended him to be a lover, since he is "not shap'd for sportive tricks" (I.i.14):

> I . . . am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
> Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,
> Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
> Into this breathing world, scarce half made up.
> (I.i.18-21)

Whether or not Richard is justified in blaming nature for giving him a villainous shape, and therefore making him a villain in fact, his misshapen body has continuous symbolic value, he brings onto the stage an aura of disorder by his deformity alone. The outward form here corresponds to the inner truth, for Richard's character is as monstrous as his body. His metaphorical association with wild beasts, night, death, hell and the devil reinforces the image of himself as he first presents it.

It is apparent from this and other examples that Shakespeare's urge to order is poised against powerful images of chaos. In Ulysses' speech chaos is represented most succinctly by the image of appetite; in Richard III by images of deformity and darkness. In Timon of Athens Timon, driven mad by the ingratitude and deceitfulness of former friends, opens Act IV with a prayer for chaos

to come, and here the central image is sexual corruption and disease.

Usually, then, chaos is brought on by an excessive passion: will to power, envy, lust, or even love. The state of chaos itself is imaged forth in terms of gluttony, deformity, darkness, bestiality, madness and disease.

The language of chaos, it should be noted, bears a strong resemblance to the language of erotic love, or fancy. Love, too, is compared to appetite:

> . . . their [women's] love may be call'd appetite--
> No motion of the liver, but the palate--
> That suffers surfeit, cloyment, and revolt;
> But mine is all as hungry as the sea
> And can digest as much.
> (Tw. Nt. II.iv.100-104)

This is Orsino in Twelfth Night, whose comparison of his appetite to that of the sea suggests the destructiveness of love in a play where the sea threatens drowning. Such destruction is more openly pointed to in Troilus' speech that anticipates his meeting with Cressida:

> I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.
> Th' imaginary relish is so sweet
> That it enchants my sense. What will it be
> When that the wat'ry palates taste indeed
> Love's thrice-repured nectar? Death, I fear me;
> Sounding destruction; or some joy too fine,
> Too subtile-potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness
> For the capacity of my ruder powers.
> I fear it much; and I do fear besides
> That I shall lose distinction in my joys,
> As doth a battle when they charge on heaps
> The enemy flying.
> (Tr. and Cress. III.ii.19-30)

Giddiness, appetite, death, the loss of powers of distinction, war--all these are characteristic of both a state of chaos and of love. Not surprisingly, Troilus' love for Cressida does in fact lead to destruction.

Even courtly love, which does not descend to the grossness of lust, is marked by disorder and is often likened to sickness or madness. Such a lover is depicted by Rosalind in As You Like It as one who would, "being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing, and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles" (III.ii.430-433)--that is, possessed by a "mad humour of love" (439). Furthermore, "Love is merely a madness, and . . . deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do" (420-422). Thus love, like chaos, is compared to a state of madness, sickness, and darkness. In As You Like It, of course, the context of this speech renders it harmless; Orlando's end will obviously not be tragic.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Similarly, the comic context of A Midsummer Night's Dream is always apparent, and the confusions of courtly love become duly clarified. But a look at the play's images of chaos in temporary isolation may show that an inhuman and potentially terrifying changefulness exists beneath the play's gossamer surface.

These images first appear in Lysander's lament on the uncertain course of true love, following Duke

Theseus' decision to support Hermia's father Egeus, who wants his daughter to marry Demetrius and not Lysander.

> The course of true love never did run smooth;
> But, either it was different in blood--
> . . . . . .
> Or else misgraffed in respect of years--
> . . . . . .
> Or else it stood upon the choice of friends--
> . . . . . .
> Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
> War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
> Making it momentany as a sound,
> Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
> Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
> That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
> And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
> The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
> So quick bright things come to confusion.
> (I.i.134-149)

This is a kind of prophecy of events that are to come later in the play, when Lysander and Hermia will be parted from each other in an atmosphere of dream and darkness. Love, says Lysander, is ephemeral, always threatened by the devouring jaws of darkness. He does not recognize that love or fancy may itself bring about confusion.

This confusion is at its height in Act III, scene ii, when Demetrius and Lysander fight with each other, Hermia and Helena quarrel, and both young men spurn Hermia, whom they formerly both loved, for Helena, who interprets their advances as mockery. This situation has come about as a result of Puck's mistaken application of the juice from a flower called love-in-idleness. The fairy king, Oberon, has explained earlier that one of Cupid's arrows fell upon "a little Western flower"

(II.i.166), turning it from white to purple, and endowing it with the power to cause a person to madly dote upon any living creature. The love-in-idleness juice, then, induces the same kind of passion as would an arrow of Cupid, and Oberon and Puck are "masks of Cupid, the one showing his mighty lordship, the other his childish mischief."[1] Puck especially resembles Cupid, in his boyishness, his propensity for disturbing the calm of his victim, the element of accident in his choice, his association with a superior personage.

Cupid, according to Erwin Panofsky, may be "changed from a personification of Divine Love to a personification of illicit Sensuality, and vice versa, by simply adding, or removing, the bandage" which he often wears in some Renaissance paintings.[2] Puck seems to have his blindfold on when he drops the love-in-idleness juice into Lysander's eyes instead of Demetrius', thus instigating a prolonged scene of confusion. But there is a more explicit suggestion of "illicit Sensuality" in the animal imagery of Oberon's gloating anticipation of what will happen to Titania when the juice is dropped into her eyes:

> The next thing then she, waking, looks upon
> (Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
> On meddling monkey, or on busy ape)
> She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
> (II.i.179-182)

Later this list is extended to "ounce or cat or bear, /

Pard, or boar with bristled hair" (II.ii.30-31). There is a glimpse here of a licentious, bestial world in which primitive natural forces dominate.[3]

The love-in-idleness device is a satirical comment on the idea of true love and constancy, as indeed the whole fairy world is, insofar as this world controls the actions of the young lovers, robbing their love of individuality and showing it rather as motivated by forces quite beyond their understanding. The setting for this fairy world is the forest. In some other Shakespearean plays, such as Titus Andronicus and Timon of Athens, the woods are settings for rape, murder, and madness: and there are hints of such chaos in A Midsummer Night's Dream as well, where the forest is a mythic world in which conventional laws have small effect.

On a natural level the chaos of the forest world is represented by the effects of a quarrel between Oberon and Titania, who are themselves personifications of magical nature. Their strife is nature's, too:

> The spring, the summer,
> The childing autumn, angry winter change
> Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
> By their increase, now knows not which is which.
> (II.i.111-114)

Not only strife, but an obscene kind of plenitude, nature as appetite, is present in the whole of this speech: the winds have sucked up fogs from the sea, the rivers have overborne their continents, the crows are fatted on carrion,

the game square is filled up with mud. This chaotic background is appropriate for the events that are to occur in the woods. The moon is the celestial symbol appropriate to this mythic world; as Titania says, "the moon, the governess of floods, / Pale in her anger, washes all the air, / That rheumatic diseases do abound" (II.i.103-105). In the light of the moon things undergo a change.

Changefulness is introduced immediately in the forest world in the person of Puck, the "merry wanderer of the night" (II.i.43) who can fool a horse by neighing like a filly, or "lurk in a gossip's bowl / In very likeness of a roasted crab" (II.i.47-48). He is mischievous and ultimately harmless, but his tricks with the lovers reveal some darker traits.

The lovers appear upon the forest scene distraught. Helena has told Demetrius, whom she loves, but who does not requite her love, that Lysander and Hermia have gone into the forest to escape the judgement of Theseus. Demetrius, accouncing his intent to slay Lysander and find Hermia, is trying to rid himself of Helena. He is "wood within this wood / Because I cannot meet my Hermia (II.i.192-193), but Helena still pursues him, willing to be treated as his spaniel, if only he will permit her to follow him. The inversion of their normal roles is further elaborated by Helena:

> The story shall be chang'd:
> Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
> The dove pursues the griffon; the mild hind

Makes speed to catch the tiger.
(II.i.230-233)

It was out of sexual desire that Apollo pursued Daphne, and Helena seems almost equally reckless, trusting the "rich worth" of her virginity to "the opportunity of night / And the ill counsel of a desert place" (II.i, 217-218).

Puck finds Lysander and Hermia asleep upon the ground, and, having been instructed by Oberon to put some love-juice into the eyes of a young Athenian, he does so to Lysander, who fortuitously awakens just when Helena comes near and immediately falls in love with her, launching into a discourse upon reason and will:

> The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
> And reason says you are the worthier maid.
> Things growing are not ripe until their season;
> So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
> And touching now the point of human skill,
> Reason becomes the marshal to my will
> And leads me to your eyes.
> (II.ii.115-121)

This is very pretty, and even convincing, if it were set in a different context. The metaphor of seasonal ripeness is particularly compelling but it describes a process quite unlike the sudden conversion Lysander has experienced, which is attributable instead to a magical juice symbolic of irrational desire. Lysander is ironic without knowing it; the irony is intended for the audience, who can see that passion rather than reason is operative here. Hermia's dream of a serpent eating her heart away confirms

the reality of what has happened as she slept--Lysander has run off in pursuit of Helena. In this instance dream is a symbolic intensification of reality, and in both the individual, as in a nightmare, is subject to threatening forces beyond his control.

From this point on confusion increases. The "clowns"--the artisans from Athens--come to the wood to rehearse the "Comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe," and their foremost actor, Bottom, has his head changed into an ass's by Puck. Titania, under the effects of Cupid's juice, falls in love with Bottom and leads him to her bower, apparently with amorous intent:

> The moon, methinks, looks with a wat'ry eye;
> And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
> Lamenting some enforced chastity.
> (III.i.203-205)[4]

Lysander reappears on stage, swearing that he loves Helena and pointing to his tears as "the badge of faith" (III.ii.127) that proves his sincerity. But Helena rebukes him for forswearing Hermia: "Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh" (III.ii.131). Here as elsewhere in Shakespeare, the word "nothing" is shadowed by a faint suggestion of Nothing, the primeval abyss of non-being that gapes wide in King Lear. A man defines himself by his oath, a liar has no consistency and no identity. So Proteus in The Two Gentlemen of Verona forswears himself (he swears always in the name of

Love) by betraying his first love Julia and his best friend Valentine. His very name signifies his lack of substance, as do myriad metaphors of shadows and images in the play.

When Demetrius awakens and declares his love for Helena, she is convinced that he and the others are in a confederacy against her, becoming especially angry at Hermia, whom she accuses of breaking the trust of their long friendship. But Lysander still insists that he loves her, and brutally shakes off the confused Hermia: "Hang off, thou cat, thou burr!" (III.ii.260-261). Hermia is so astounded she calls their identities into question: "Am not I Hermia? Are not you Lysander?" (273). Unable to believe that her true love would willingly leave her, she blames Helena, and a bitter quarrel ensues. Then the lovers disperse, all at odds.

Lysander's early speech now seems indeed prophetic: true love's course is rough to the point of being obliterated. Love is besieged by night-madness, identity-loss, "war," and the forest's "jaws of darkness." Sudden transformations brought on by powers of unreason have resulted in a web of misunderstanding. Even a member of the fairy world is caught in the web; Titania, "full of hateful fantasies" (II.i.258) courts gross Bottom, who, as his name and transformed head indicate, is an ass in a double sense. This confused situation is indirectly the work of Cupid, the god of Love, and it has the characteristics

of chaos, the underworld that appears in images of madness, deformity, darkness and bestiality. Thus love leads to destruction.

Structurally, this point in the play is "the cycle of a Fall which brings the domination of unbridled passion," according to Paul Olson.[5] Here design is least in evidence; the original order of the city with which the play opens has been displaced by confusion in the forest. Even Oberon's controlling influence seems ineffectual: "The fate o'errules," says Puck (III.ii.92). Northrop Frye finds that comic structure is based on ritual, in the middle phase of which there is a period of license and confusion of values; in comedy this middle phase is marked by a temporary loss of identity.[6] Such confusion and loss mark the middle phase of A Midsummer Night's Dream quite distinctly.

But a middle implies a beginning and an end, and chaos in A Midsummer Night's Dream, which has broken down the semblance of order at the play's beginning, will be resolved at the end. One indication of this within the middle phase of the play is the near absence of appetite, the most important characteristic of chaos. Oberon's desire for revenge on Titania is short-lived, the lovers commit no rapes or murders, Titania is foolish but not lewd. The absence of appetite makes chaos, however painfully the lovers experience it, more apparent than real. If real chaos--the result of lust, madness, a

boundless will to power--had been allowed, the play would not have been a comedy, and the transformation of perception by which order can be seen in disorder would have been impossible. For in the tragedies, disorder is real, and order is set over against it, rather than being implicit within it. The passion of the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream occasionally imitates the blind movements of lust, and the fairy world absorbs mortals into itself almost as though it had devouring jaws: but these are diluted and harmless forms of appetite.

The Tempest

In A Midsummer Night's Dream there is a point in the action where events seem genuinely, if temporarily, out of control, when the lovers and the fairy queen are all mismatched. There is no such moment in The Tempest; Prospero's intent is much more definite than Oberon's, and Ariel, unlike Puck, makes no mistakes. Yet the spectre of chaos is more insistent and more threatening in The Tempest, in the persons of the unteachable Caliban and the unrepentant Antonio and Sebastian. Where chaos seems most actual, as in the storm at the beginning, or the madness to which the court party is driven, it is most illusory, for these are feats of Prospero's magic.

The chaos that Prospero wreaks is intended to change those who are its victims. It differs from the chaos in King Lear, say, in its calculatedness, and in

the fact that it does its victims no real harm. Those who are subject to it do not know this, of course, and Shakespeare gives their perspective first in the opening storm scene. Prospero is a controlled but irascible character; the storm symbolizes his inner fury (which is yet a redemptive force). But from the court party's point of view only the fury is apparent, and so it seems even to Prospero's daughter Miranda, who is frightened by what she sees: "The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch / But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek, / Dashes the fire out" (Tp. I.ii.3-5). As in Ovid's description of the first Chaos ("in one selfesame bodie strove the hote and colde togither"--I.18), the elements are at war. This scene of chaos at the play's beginning is to be succeeded by a kind of creation by Prospero, who is able to give "second life" (V.i.195).

The spirit Ariel is a kind of personified magical nature who takes on different shapes, like Puck in A Midsummer Night's Dream. But whereas Puck only plays chaotic pranks, Ariel is capable of manifesting himself as chaos; he is the fire that assaults the sea, and he is supernaturally terrifying:

> Jove's lightnings, the precursors
> O' th' dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary
> And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and cracks
> Of sulphurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
> Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble;
> Yea, his dread trident shake.
> (I.ii.201-206)

Besides throwing nature into disorder, Ariel also has the

power to drive men mad, according to Prospero's intent:

> Pros. My brave spirit!
> Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil
> Would not infect his reason?
>
> Ari. Not a soul
> But felt a fever of the mad and play'd
> Some tricks of desperation.
> (207-210)

Once on the island, the court party is given little respite; they look for Ferdinand, the son of Alonso, but almost without hope. For Alonso, the loss is perceived as consumption by a creature of appetite: "O thou mine heir / Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish / Hath made his meal on thee?" (II.i.111-113). Nature itself seems determined to disorder these men: "The powers . . . / Incens'd the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures, / Against your peace" (III.iii.73-75). They are driven to distraction by spells, each one's brain "boil'd within thy skull" (V.i.59). The chaos manifested through Ariel is seen as conflict in nature and madness in men. But all this has its meaning.

Appetite is meaningless; it is a consuming force that blindly eats its way to nothingness. In The Tempest the chaos that results from unleashed appetite is not allowed freedom to range, yet even in its contained form it is always present.

Appetite occurs on two social levels, the higher represented by Antonio and Sebastian (King Alonso's brother) and the lower by the clowns Stephano and

Trinculo. Then there is a sub-level occupied by the monster Caliban. The island is a little world in which the events of the larger world are re-created on a small scale. In the world at large, Antonio has usurped Prospero's position; that is history. On the island, history begins to repeat itself, for Antonio incites Sebastian to murder Alonso for the kingdom of Naples. The island, which might be a potential paradise, has no immediate reforming power over men's appetite. Sebastian and Antonio perceive life in the same terms as always; when Gonzalo imagines a golden world in which all people would be idle and innocent, they twist his meaning to fit their wolfish perceptions:

> Seb. No marrying 'mong his subjects?
>
> Ant. None, man! All idle--whores and knaves.
> (II.i.165-166)

But their appetite goes beyond lust; it is a will to power that seeks dominance over kingdoms. When Alonso and the others suddenly fall asleep Antonio immediately sees an opportunity for power, and tempts Sebastian to murder the sleeping king. His appetite is uncurbed by any qualms of conscience, which he dismisses with Machiavellian pragmatism as an illusion:

> Ay, sir! Where lies that? If 'twere a kibe,
> 'Twould put me to my slipper; but I feel not
> This deity in my bosom.
> (II.ii.276-278)

Antonio wants to re-enact the events of twelve years before, not for any tangible reward (for all he knows, he and the others will be stranded on the desert island for life), but because he is under the unrestrained compulsion of an irrational will to power.[7] Prospero himself takes the blame for awakening this desire in his brother:

> . . . my trust,
> Like a good parent, did beget of him
> A falsehood in its contrary as great
> As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
> A confidence sans bound.
> (I.ii.93-97)

If Sebastian's would-be murder is a repetition of Antonio's crime, Antonio's usurpation is a repetition of Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden: Prospero's paternal trust, like God's, was infinite, and the breaking of it resulted in the possibility of infinite evil. Adam's fall was the beginning of history, and history is the record of repetition-compulsion, a kind of madness.

The point is made again in the sub-plot, in which the jester Trinculo and the butler Stephano act out a parody of the main action. It is an amusing and entertaining parody, as though Shakespeare wants to show that madness has a humourous side, and that boundless ambition is after all ridiculous. Stephano and Trinculo plot with Caliban to murder Prospero and abduct Miranda. As Stephano envisions it: " . . . I will kill this man. His daughter and I will be king and queen, save our Graces!" (III.ii.114-116). But Stephano is hardly a murderous type,

and more devoted to his bottle of wine--a baser appetite--than to ambitions of kingship. When the world is reduced to the level of Stephano and Trinculo, it goes like Montaigne's, "unquietly and staggering, with a naturall drunkennesse,"[8] or as Trinculo puts it: "They say there's but five upon this isle. We are three of them. If th' other two be brain'd like us, the state totters" (III.ii.6-8). This reference to the tottering state is of course facetious, but also reminds the reader that a large part of Prospero's project is to establish a firm government, and that appetite, in all its forms, is the force he must overcome to do so.

Stephano and Trinculo are fools, but the monster Caliban whom they deride is more than a fool, because he is less than human. Frank Kermode, who reads The Tempest as a pastoral drama concerned with the opposition of nature and art, says that Caliban is a representation of "raw, unreclaimed nature" whose "origins and character are natural in the sense that they do not partake of grace, civility, and art; he is ugly in body, associated with an evil natural magic, and unqualified for rule or nurture."[9] The association with magic is evident from Caliban's parentage: his mother was the witch Sycorax, his father (according to Prospero) "the devil himself" (I.ii.319). Thus Caliban is a creature of the lowest level of the cosmos, and this accounts for his wickedness which is manifested most clearly in his instigation of

the plot against Prospero's life.

This "earth," as Prospero names him (I.ii.313) seems like a kind of primitive Edmund, the bastard son in King Lear who equates nature with lust and the law of appetite, as do Richard III and Iago. All of these villains have a general quality of vice, perhaps inherited from the Vice-figure of medieval drama, but all are distinct individuals as well. Dull Caliban is less recognizable as a character in his own right, and the principle he embodies is not that of the Vice, exactly. He combines an active propensity to evil with a simple brute nature, and is therefore both "abhorred," as Prospero calls him (I.ii.352) and "ridiculous," as Trinculo says (II.ii.170). His deformity is pointed to many times, especially by Prospero, and the description in "Names of the Actors"--"a savage and deformed slave"--confirms Prospero's.

One critic calls Caliban "the incarnation of chaos," and adds: "he is unnatural; he is not simply unformed nature, he is deformed."[10] Chaos, as the state of the universe before creation, is unformed matter, the elements at war. It is neither good nor evil, though seen from the perspective of an ordered universe, it seems evil. Caliban, as an incarnation of chaos, is evil because he lives in a world that values order. He is creation that has fallen back into a chaotic state, thus he is not just unformed--though he seems to retain something of this primal condition--but deformed.

In the Biblical account of creation, the Spirit broods over the wastes of chaos; creation is the infusion of matter with spirit. Caliban, devoid of any values beyond the serving of his appetite, is matter that resists spirit. He makes much of eating (and his name may be an anagram for "cannibal"), has attempted to violate Miranda, and describes the proposed murder of Prospero in eager detail. Once he discovers that Stephano is not a spirit, he worships him as a god. He develops an immediate taste for wine, and willingly swears by the bottle. In his adoration of Stephano and the wine he displays the need to transcend his state, but in actuality he descends into even more grossness.

Chaos in The Tempest is not so much in the event, as in A Midsummer Night's Dream, as it is a condition toward which human beings move. In the early comedy there is much confusion, arising mainly from the effects of a love-juice that symbolizes unruly passion. In The Tempest there is some confusion, particularly the opening storm scene in which not only nature but also the social order is in turmoil--the boatswain commands the noblemen. But this is the only scene in which the event is not transparent; in all the subsequent action the audience knows as much as Prospero and therefore sees the design through the confusion. To the characters in the play, however, nature does appear chaotic, and all suffer fits of madness--though this madness is not as prolonged as in

A Midsummer Night's Dream. The action of The Tempest takes place during the day, and yet the darkness is greater than that of a midsummer night. In The Tempest the agent of confusion is not erotic passion but the sensual lust and boundless ambition of men like Antonio and Sebastian, whose reality is more definite than any found in A Midsummer Night's Dream. The threat of destruction in The Tempest outweighs the actual confusion in A Midsummer Night's Dream, especially since this threat is never totally eradicated, despite Prospero's god-like power.

The passion of love, the greater appetites of lust and ambition, are agents of change; they transform an orderly world into chaos. The language of transformation in the neoplatonic tradition implies a movement toward a higher state of being, but it can also be parodied to describe a descent into a lower level of existence. Shakespeare does this with Bottom in A Midsummer Night's Dream (Peter Quince, upon seeing his friend with an ass's head, cries, "Bless thee, Bottom! Bless thee! Thou art translated"--III.i.121-122); and he does it with particular effectiveness in The Tempest in Prospero's tale of his brother's betrayal. Antonio "new-created / The creatures that were mine, I say, or chang'd 'em, / Or else new-form'd 'em" (I.ii.81-83). The disintegration of form or the changing of form into monstrosity can be stated in terms of transformation. But in these two plays chaos is a prelude to order, and the negative

transformations or the process of disintegration are part of a larger design in which chaos is metamorphosed into proportion and beauty.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF LOVE

"Love is Desire aroused by Beauty," said Plato in The Symposium. It was a definition accepted by the neoplatonists of the Renaissance, for whom the experience of love or Amor was similar to an initiation into a pagan mystery; the lover, seized by Amor, is transported into rapture, an inspired state of being in which there is communion with the divine. Desire is the catalytic force that transforms the lover, purging his earthiness and drawing him out of himself into a state of bliss. But it is desire "aroused by Beauty," thus distinguishing it from mere appetite or lust and associating it with proportion and form. Love is a movement toward the beautiful.[1] Amor can also be the ordering principle in the universe, as Spenser depicts it in the Hymne in Honour of Love, in which the god Love takes the warring elements of Chaos, and tempering their contrariety, places them in order. Spenser personifies Love as the blind boy Cupid, and does not neglect to mention the pains and sickness his arrows cause. But love is carefully distinguished from lust, and the chaotic phase of hardship and distraction through which the lovers must pass is ultimately seen as a means of increasing the glory of

their eventual restoration to grace. Love's blindness enables the lover to overcome obstacles which might deter him if they were visible. Finally, the lover is ennobled and transformed by his passion:

> Such is the powre of that sweet passion,
> That it all sordid basenesse doth expell,
> And the refyned mynd doth newly fashion
> Unto a fairer forme, which now doth dwell
> In his high thought, that would it selfe excell.[2]

Love is a passion; it can also be compassion. Compassion is not characterized by rapture; it is rather a Mitgefühl, a feeling-with, a shared suffering. Amor tends toward individual transcendence; compassion remains grounded in the ordinary and seeks human community. Compassion is "the quality of mercy," and hence, as Portia says, "an attribute to God himself" (Merch. of Ven. IV.i.195); it is the means to salvation that tempers the severity of justice, by which all would be damned. Compassionate love is a movement toward the weak and human, and may sacrifice formal beauty for the ideal of communitas. Amor moves upward, compassion downward; each in its way transforms both the individual lover and those around him whom he loves.

A setting in which these two loves can meet is found in the Golden Age, where the pleasure principle is dominant and law does not exist, and where, nevertheless, life is communal and all things are held in common.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The forest in A Midsummer Night's Dream is a mythic world in which transformations occur with a suddenness and gratuitousness suggesting chaos. But there is also a freedom from law in the forest that suggests a golden world in which man's possibilities of being are limitless and each transformation is only another extension of being. In such a world life is play, love is "love-in-idleness," and nature is abundant. These traits are especially associated with Titania in some of the play's richest poetry:

> I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
> There sleeps Titania . . . .
> (II.i.249-253)

"If there is a single unifying concept which runs through the corpus of texts about the golden age," says Harry Levin, "it is pleasure."[3] The pleasure-principle in a mildly erotic form permeates the forest world, and it is this aspect of the Golden Age, rather than the ideal of community, that holds sway. The ideal of community, to be sure, is vital to the play's conclusion, but it is intertwined with the values of a civilized, hierarchical society that is unlike that of the Golden Age. Nevertheless, compassionate love as well as Amor is found in both forest and city, and in both it brings about a social harmony.

It is the tradition of Amor just as Spenser describes it that Shakespeare satirizes in A Midsummer Night's Dream, where the rapture produced by Cupid's love-juice seems nearer chaos than a golden world. Yet the satire is light, and in fact a new order is achieved through love; Shakespeare will have it both ways. This ambivalence is especially strong in a speech by Helena early in the play which lays down a kind of theoretical basis for the events which are to follow:

> Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
> Love can transpose to form and dignity.
> Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
> And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.
> Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
> Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste.
> And therefore is Love said to be a child,
> Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
> (I.i.232-239)

Love's unheedy haste and lack of judgment have already been discussed: what of love's power to transform things base and vile to form and dignity? The blindness of Cupid need not imply illicit sensuality; it can also mean an elevated level of consciousness in mystic phraseology. Edgar Wind quotes the neoplatonist Pico della Mirandola: "Love is said by Orpheus to be without eyes because he is above the intellect."[4] The eyes, of all the sense organs, are closest to the faculty of reason; love, or eros, is above reason, transcending logic and common sense. Outer blindness in this case indicates inner sight, the ability to see what to ordinary eyes is invisible. The lover sees

divinity where others see only the usual; he is full of heavenly fancies or imaginations. Lysander and Demetrius, when they awaken from sleep after the love-juice has been placed into their eyes, break into mystic language which in its exaggeration seems itself to be a vehicle for transformation. Earlier Demetrius has told Helena the sight of her makes him sick; but in Act III she is divinely metamorphosed:

> O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
> To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
> Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
> Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
> That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow
> Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
> When thou hold'st up thy hand. O, let me kiss
> This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
> (III.ii.137-144)

The actual transformation is in Demetrius, not Helena, But he transfers his change onto her--and, in his mind, she really has changed. Previously, she has been similarly transformed for Lysander: "Transparent Helena! Nature shows art, / That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart' (II.ii.104-105). Both young men see a heavenly body where formerly they saw an ordinary mortal one. Their change of perception is preceded by a sleep, a metaphorical death into a new life that resembles heaven or at least a state of being in which the ordinary is seen as glorious.

Titania experiences a similar transformation. She is awakened from sleep by Bottom's bray (his head

having been turned into an ass's), and calls: "What angel wakes me from my flow'ry bed?" (III.i.132). Under the power of love, even an ass can become an angel. Titania specifically is attracted to Bottom's form: "Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note; / So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape" (III.i.141-142). And she promises that she "will purge thy mortal grossness so / That thou shalt like an airy spirit go" (III.i.163-164). Titania's ability to see a potential "airy spirit" in the hairy monster is testimony to the infinite power of love, a power that is in nature but also above nature, like the fairies. Here, too, the atmosphere of the Golden Age is felt; there is a suspension of time ("The summer still doth tend upon my state," says Titania--III.i.158), and all mortal needs are attended to by nature, here personified in the tiny fairies that accompany Titania.

From Bottom's side of it, Amor may as well not exist; while enchanted he neither encourages nor discourages Titania's advances, but enjoys the simple sensual pleasure of being catered to by miniature sprites. But when he awakens, the ass's head having been removed, he phrases his sense of wonder in terms that parody scripture, just as the high-flown language of the lovers imitates religious language:

> The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was.
> (IV.i.214-218)

The original on which this nonsense is based is in Paul's

first letter to the Corinthians:

> The things which eye hathe not sene, nether eare hathe heard, nether came into mans heart, are, which God hathe prepared for them that love him. But God hathe reveiled them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deepe things of God.[5]

The "deepe things of God" are mysteries beyond the reach of ordinary mortal sense experience, open only to those who love God. The wisdom given by the Spirit is hidden, a heavenly wisdom that "the princes of this worlde" (I Cor. ii.8) do not understand, for they are unable to accept the paradox that lives at the heart of the New Testament: that the divine becomes mortal, the mighty becomes weak, and this mortality and weakness is nevertheless the means by which God redeems fallen man.[6]

Bottom's dream "hath no bottom" (IV.ii.220); it is a comical version of mystical ecstasy in which the mystic yields up his hold on self and is unified with God. The ass's head emphasizes Bottom's simple humility to the point where he appears foolish and monstrous. When he tries to describe his experience his language is chaotic, the senses at war with their proper members.[7] But Titania's love for him was real while it lasted; he alone of all the mortals was granted a taste of quasi-divine love--was, as Starveling the tailor says, "Out of doubt . . . transported" (IV.ii.3-4). True, his change is entirely exterior; he remains the same before, during, and after his encounter with the spirit world. But he does not need changing, childishly innocent as he is. For

Oberon, Bottom is merely a vehicle of revenge upon Titania, yet through this accident of choice he is granted the fairy queen's love. At every point the yoking of Titania and Bottom is made to seem ridiculous, but some sense of supernatural mystery is retained. Even Bottom knows this.

Amor's sudden changes resemble those in Ovid's Metamorphoses, which are frequently also brought on by the power of erotic love. Sometimes supernatural passion is present in nature, as when Jove becomes a thundercloud, a bull, or a swan before ravishing the maiden of his choice. The love-juice symbolizes a similar--though lesser --supernatural erotic power in nature in A Midsummer Night's Dream, where the supernatural and natural realms are interfused in the juice of the little Western flower that was struck by Cupid's arrow.

But whereas in Ovid "love" is sometimes synonymous with "rape," Shakespeare draws a line of restraint which neither the lovers nor Bottom and Titania cross. When Lysander and Hermia first go to sleep in the forest they are careful to preserve the chastity befitting courtly lovers. As Hermia says:

> . . . gentle friend, for love and courtesy
> Lie further off, in humane modesty;
> Such separation as may well be said
> Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid.
> (II.ii.56-60)

This is the ideal the lovers take with them from the city into the forest: love, courtesy, humane modesty. In

the transformations of the night, the ideal is temporarily lost from sight, but further transformations restore it once more. Indeed, Oberon's love-juice accomplishes more than mere courtesy could, since the lovers are properly paired only after their forest experience. Before, Demetrius' desire for Hermia had upset the balance of affection that might have existed had he returned Helena's love. Only after application of the juice from Cupid's flower does Demetrius see aright, and when, in Act IV, the lovers are awakened from sleep by Theseus' hunting party, the new peace is so obvious that Theseus remarks on it: "How comes this gentle concord in the world / That hatred is so far from jealousy / To sleep by hate and fear no enmity?" (IV.i.146-148). Demetrius has no explanation, except that he has been somehow changed:

> . . . my good lord, I wot not by what power
> (But by some power it is) my love to Hermia,
> Melted as the snow, seems to me now
> As the remembrance of an idle gaud
> Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
> And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
> The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
> Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
> Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia;
> But, like a sickness, did I loathe this food;
> But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
> Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
> And will for evermore be true to it.
> (167-169)

Amor has transformed Demetrius from a child into an adult, from sickness into health, from the unnatural to the natural. The element of rigidity and illness in society which is represented by Egeus' insistence that the law

should still fall on the heads of Lysander and Hermia is eliminated through Demetrius' transformation into a true lover from a "spotted and inconstant man' (I.i.110). After hearing Demetrius' speech, Theseus simply overbears Egeus and declares a triple wedding. Compare this with Theseus' attitude in Act I, where he insists that Hermia must obey her father:

> To you your father should be as a god;
> One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one
> To whom you are but as a form in wax,
> By him imprinted, and within his power
> To leave the figure, or disfigure it.
> (I.i.47-51)

Cupid replaces the father-figure as god, and Theseus accepts the fact that Hermia takes the love god's imprint instead of the father's.

The transformations wrought by Cupid, or fancy, thus help introduce a renewed society. Yet Cupid is dangerously capricious and therefore his influence must be complemented by a different magic from another flower. Oberon commands Puck to

> . . . crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
> Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
> To take from thence all error with his might
> And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
> (III.ii.366-369)

This is the same herb that restores Titania's former vision:

> Be as thou wast wont to be;
> See as thou was wont to see.
> Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
> Hath such force and blessed power.
> (IV.i.74-77)

Magical chastity, symbolized by "Dian's bud," has at least equal power to Cupid's, and does not nullify love but restores it to its proper object. At the end of A Midsummer Night's Dream a kind of marriage between Cupid and Dian, erotic passion and humane modesty, is effected.[8]

Essential to the final metamorphoses by which each individual becomes what he is "wont to be"--that is, achieves his true identity as defined by society in the play--is Oberon's good intent. This is obvious from the beginning, when even Titania, who is quarreling with Oberon over the possession of a changeling boy, acknowledges that he has come to bring "joy and prosperity" (II.i.73) to the bed of Theseus and Hippolyta. A hint that Oberon shall bring harmony through love's influence is also heard in his reminder to Puck (and the audience) that, at the very time he saw Cupid's shaft miss a vestal virgin and strike the little Western flower, giving it love's wound, he was sitting

> . . . upon a promontory
> And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
> To hear the sea-maid's music.
> (II.i.149-154)

The mermaid's song is a kind of background for love's transformations; love, too, can make such harmony that the rude sea of passion turns civil. The potential danger in the image of the mermaid is offset by the

association of the dolphin with salvation from drowning; similarly, the apparently chaotic image of stars shooting from their spheres actually implies a harmony of such miraculous power that it is sweeter even than that made by the music of the spheres.

Only his desire for vengeance upon Titania mars Oberon's benevolence. The plight of Helena pleading futilely with Demetrius arouses spontaneous pity in him. And, once he is given back the changeling, he pities his fairy queen for her dotage upon an ass, and undoes that "hateful imperfection of her eyes" (IV.i.66). His compassion thus embraces both fairy and human worlds, and at the end of the play he confirms the human order by his blessing:

> So shall all the couples three
> Ever true in loving be;
> And the blots of Nature's hand
> Shall not in their issue stand.
> (V.i.414-417)

Obviously, Amor is the dominant form of love in A Midsummer Night's Dream, but it is also apparent that Oberon is moved by mercy or compassion when he witnesses the lovers' strife and Titania's foolishness. In "Dian's bud" especially, there is a quality of mercy, since this herb brings individuals into proper relationship with their respective communities, rather than causing them to go off into a rapture. Oberon's status as king, his desire for possession of the changeling boy, his mastery

over the boyish Puck, establish him as a fatherly personage; and this, along with his quasi-divine nature, suggests that in him compassion is indeed a God-like attribute. The temperance of chaos into a blessed human society depends upon Oberon's compassion; if Puck were in charge the night's jangling would never end and there would be no escaping the Ovidian wood. As it is, the aims of fairy and human worlds coincide; the dark woods are only the middle phase in a circular journey that leads back to Athens and the courtly, aristocratic life it represents, where to be well-derived, wealthy, and owner of a good reputation is enough to make one eminently desirable. Athens is the scene of the play's conclusion because it is civilized, has laws and customs to govern behavior. The communal security of conventional law is essential to the social harmony that concludes the comic movement.

The Tempest

Amor in The Tempest contains a significantly stronger note of chastity than in A Midsummer Night's Dream, and is lacking entirely in the motif of confusion. Ferdinand and Miranda, though enraptured, do not lose their heads. Their contribution to a new society does indeed depend upon their true love, yet their effect is at least as much symbolic as actual.

Throughout, there is a strong, unwavering note of gentility and civility in their love. Like the lovers of A Midsummer Night's Dream, however, they change upon

seeing each other, and this change is indicated by elevated language. Miranda says of Ferdinand: "I might call him / A thing divine: for nothing natural / I ever saw so noble" (I.ii.417-418), and Ferdinand in turn calls her "goddess" (421) and "wonder" (426). They see each other in terms of transcendence. Prospero remarks that "[a]t the first sight / They have chang'd eyes" (I.ii.440-441), and there may be a double meaning in "chang'd": "exchanged," but also, "transformed," as in A Midsummer Night's Dream where a change of love is indicated by a change in the eyes. Miranda, particularly, is exalted through Ferdinand's love-struck eyes; she is "the top of admiration" (III.i.38), "perfect and peerless" (47), and her mere presence is enough to transform darkness into light: "'Tis fresh morning with me / When you are by at night" (34).

All this courtly rhetoric has the effect of placing the lovers on a higher plane than the other characters; in their innocence and beauty they are emblematic of Edenic values. Their small Eden exists in the midst of a sophisticated conflict between forces of evil and good that they are not even aware of; they live in mythic time, outside of history, free from the contamination of experience. But at the conclusion of the play Eden does intersect with the historical world, in one of the series of revelations that Prospero makes. He pulls aside the curtain to his cell and discovers Ferdinand and Miranda playing chess. Alonso's amazement and gladness arise principally from

his having found the son he thought was drowned, but also from the sight of Miranda, whom he refers to as "goddess," being there with Ferdinand. For similar reasons, Sebastian exclaims, "A most high miracle!" (V.i.177). This note of wonder, echoing the lovers' own attitude, suggests that chaste love can cast a transforming light upon an evil world,[9] an idea that is confirmed by Miranda:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
> That has such people in't!
> (V.i.182-183)

In view of events that Miranda is ignorant of, this exclamation is supremely ironical; yet, as an ideal, it is indispensable. Without the vision of a "brave new world," improvement would be impossible. Miranda sees with the eyes of innocent love, and her amity with Ferdinand corroborates this vision; for her the ideal is not an ideal but simple reality, truly seen. Seen from the outside, it is a model to which others may aspire.

The new world in which Miranda lives, and which for her extends to everyone in sight, is frighteningly fragile, threatened obviously from without by the monstrous appetites of Antonio, Sebastian, Caliban--even Stephano, but also from within by the weaknesses of the human condition. Thus Prospero repeatedly warns Ferdinand that "[t]he strongest oaths are straw / To the fire i' th' blood" (IV.i.52-53), and there is a portent

that even the gentle Miranda is susceptible to sensual love and the mortality such love implies: "Poor worm, thou art infected!" (III.i.31).

Despite the fragility of the transformed world which Amor creates, it contains the ideal which consummates Prospero's project: chastity, fidelity, innocence. This ideal extends to the world of state affairs as well, for Ferdinand and Miranda are named as future rulers over Milan and Naples. As in The Winter's Tale, the enmity between fathers is changed to amity by the love of the children, and the future is brightened by the prospect of civil rule by lovers whose affection indicates renewal and the reduction of chaos to order. It is certain that the mythical new world will not be left intact once it has been infected by experience; perhaps this vulnerability partly accounts for its beauty. Innocent love is not sufficient truly to change the world, but without it the world could never be changed. As in Spenser's Hymne in Honour of Love, love's blindness lets the lover go where, if he could see, he might fear to tread.

Gonzalo, the holy man of charity, is the only one who sees with eyes comparably innocent to those of Ferdinand and Miranda; he sees what is potentially there rather than what is actually there, and thus the island sets him off on a reverie of the Golden Age based on a passage from Montaigne's essay "On Cannibals":

I' th' commonwealth I would by contraries

> Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation; all men idle, all;
> And women too, but innocent and pure;
> No sovereignty.
> . . . . . .
> All things in common nature should produce
> Without sweat or endeavour. Treason, felony,
> Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine
> Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
> Of it [sic] own kind, all foison, all abundance,
> To feed my innocent people.
>
> (II.i.147-164)

Miranda, especially, would be at home in such an innocent, artless world. Thus envisioned, the Golden Age is not so much a place where changes occur as an ideal goal toward which the metamorphic process moves. The ideal of the Golden Age informs the ordinary world with love's metamorphic power--though within the Golden Age itself there is constancy: being, not becoming.

In contrast to A Midsummer Night's Dream, the Golden Age is emphatically a place of community, and the freedom from law contains only a slight suggestion of the transcendence characteristic of Amor, in the reference to innocent and pure men and women. The absence of judgment and strife of any kind indicates that Gonzalo imagines compassion--concern for the welfare of the community--as the binding force in this golden world. Prospero, a man of law and hierarchy, seems untouched by this ideal, but in fact he tries to bring about a situation of commonality.

Prospero is a scholar, a ruler, a cool magician who exercises complete control over spirit and human worlds, someone we can admire, says W. H. Auden, but "one cannot possibly like him."[10] Yet there are times when Prospero, in his role as a providential figure who leads mankind to a happy end, is a lover. Prospero's great manipulative power and his constant observance mark him as a type of supernatural force; his own promise tells us that this force is benevolent, and though this benevolence is sometimes left in the background it is mainly confirmed by final events.

When Miranda sees the ship apparently foundering in the tempest she is overcome with compassion: "O, I have suffered / With those that I saw suffer!" (I.ii.5-6). Prospero assures her that there's no harm done, "not so much perdition as an hair / Betid to any creature in the vessel" (I.ii.30-31). The phrase concerning the loss of a hair, which Ariel later repeats ("Not a hair perish'd" --I.ii.217) recalls Christ's assurance that the heavenly Father, who sees each sparrow that falls, will take much better care of his children, since "all the heeres of your heade are nombred" (Matt. 10:30). Prospero's providential care is like God's, and like God he seeks to change men by drawing them nearer to himself. But his desire for vengeance is at odds with his benevolent intent; indeed, at the end of Act IV the action reaches a point of stasis which for Prospero is also a point of some indecision.

Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian are all prisoners of a spell, the others of the court party standing by helpless with sorrow, especially Gonzalo, whose "tears run down his beard like winter's drops / From eaves of reeds" (V.i.16-17), by Ariel's report.

The imprisomment of the three noblemen represents an immobile state preceding conversion or metamorphosis, but the impetus of this change must come from compassion. Like Oberon looking upon Titania enamored of an ass, Prospero, having done with taunting, feels pity. But not without some prompting from Ariel:

> Ari. Your charm so strongly works 'em,
> That if you now beheld them, your affections
> Would become tender.
>
> Pros. Dost thou think so, spirit?
>
> Ari. Mine would, sir, were I human.
>
> Pros. And mine shall.
> Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
> One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
> Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?
> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th'
> quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance.
> (V.i.16-28)

Though there is something too consciously willed about Prospero's compassion, and though he is nudged into it, it is still the motivating force behind the last of Prospero's magical transformations, which frees his enemies into the possibility of grace, and indeed changes

Prospero himself. For he takes his inspiration from Miranda, allowing himself to suffer like those he has seen suffer, and weeps with Gonzalo: "Mine eyes, ev'n sociable to the show of thine, / Fall fellowly drops" (V.i.63-64). The greatest compassion Providence can show is to lower itself to the level of mere humanity, and in fact, to become human.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest, Amor transforms ordinary mortals into gods: in the first play this love is presented as an erotic power working from without, and present in nature; in the second it is shown as a power springing spontaneously from within, and separate from nature; in both, the language itself seems to help effect a transformation by its rhetorical sweep, metaphor strains to become metamorphosis.[11] In each play the power of love is counterbalanced by a sector of society that is immune to love, but in The Tempest Miranda and Ferdinand are never satirized, as the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream are, because they represent a golden ideal that is required to contend with more trenchant evils than any in A Midsummer Night's Dream. Yet in the earlier play love is the more active transforming power. This is in accordance with the respective natures of the quasi-divine figures who control the action in each play; Oberon is himself a lover, "[p]laying on pipes of corn, and versing love / To amorous Phillida" (II.i. 67-68) or whatever other lady suits his fancy: but

Prospero is primarily an artist, and art, rather than love, is his primary means for metamorphosing chaos into form.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF ART

The Renaissance concept of nature is twofold: there is nature as perfect divine law; and on a lower level, the fallen nature in which men ordinarily live. In The Enchanted Glass Hardin Craig states the relationships between the two realms:

> One of the things assumed . . . was a system of correspondences between a spiritual universe perfect in form, function, and operation and a material universe imperfect in these respects, the correspondences being, however, so shrouded in obscurity by the obstructions which the soul of man, enmeshed in clay, encounters in the exercise of its natural function of intuition that ideals and prototypes remain unknown.[1]

In other words, perfection exists, but is unattainable; man sees through a glass, darkly. "[O]ur erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it," said Philip Sidney.[2] Yet the Renaissance, as opposed to the Middle Ages, was a time when man's earthly perfection, his godlikeness, seemed almost attainable; the neoplatonists, for example, believed that man's clay-enmeshed soul might indeed pass through obscurities to a world of ideals and prototypes--temporarily in states of mystic vision, if not permanently. The sage might see God.

The artist, too, can reach the ideal by making a

little world that is perfectly significant and coherent in obedience to the laws of higher nature. If he is a playwright, this world is presented on the stage, where the opportunities for imitating life are obvious. But this imitation is not strictly naturalistic; it proceeds according to its own rules which are derived from an ideal standard of harmony, balance, and proportion. As Wylie Sypher puts it:

> The renaissance artist-and-scientist has an abiding faith that space is strictly measurable and can be formally arranged within a cosmos, that all the constructions of art have a unity, harmony, and coherence. Consequently the disposing of elements proportionately in architecture, sculpture, and painting corresponds, by analogy, to the literary attempt to organize episodes and characters according to a principle of propriety, decorum, or "probability."[3]

Hamlet says that "the purpose of playing . . . is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature" (Ham. III.ii.23-25) when he urges his players to avoid overdoing their parts; the modesty for which Hamlet pleads is similar to the formal arrangement to which Sypher refers. Hamlet wants his players to imitate humanity, and hopes that their imitative skill will create an illusory world which has the appearance of life, but this illusory world is definitely not an imitation of raw existence; the mirror reflects selectively and unifyingly. In so doing it transforms the ordinary world into a concentrated vision, showing "the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (III.ii.27-28).

But the play Hamlet itself is not perfectly unified

or coherent; it is full of "problems" that defy definitive answers; a critic who would make perfect harmony of the play might be warned as Guildenstern is that all the "stops" of this recorder cannot be known. In the comedies and romances, however, Shakespeare follows formula much more closely than in Hamlet, and the sense of artificial design imposed upon life is correspondingly greater. Life is transformed by art, almost beyond recognition; the principle of harmony--not, admittedly, exactly identifiable with the idea of decorum, since the romances are in some ways quite "improbable"--organizes episodes and characters so thoroughly that individuality and history are nearly replaced by types and myth. In both A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest, for example, a formal design brings about a transcendent ending, in which all problems are apparently solved, thus accomplishing an illusory "spiritual universe perfect in form, function, and operation." Here the mirror reflects so selectively that it shows a nearly perfect, divine nature.

I have shown that chaos, or sub-nature, is a definite presence in the two plays under discussion. There is a design in each play that seeks the One in the many, attempts to draw together all disparities into a final unity which is like Sidney's second nature, "golden."[4] But in each play the goal of perfection, which is to turn chaos into proportion through art, is not wholly attained. Even in these mythic plays death

or types of death perversely disrupt the ideal conclusion. Ironically, this is the very reason that the plays live; if art's golden world was not tainted with lead, it would be boring. Shakespeare, in these plays, displays the realization of the Renaissance ideal of perfection and then deliberately reveals the clumsiness or vulnerability of the illusion.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

In A Midsummer Night's Dream characters and events are transformed through art into a formal arrangement in which such socially derived principles as propriety and decorum are dominant. These principles are mainly expressed by the appropriate pairing of the lovers: Theseus and Hippolyta, Oberon and Titania, Demetrius and Helena, Lysander and Hermia. Bottom's return to his fellow artisans is also an instance of appropriate pairing, so that this harmony is achieved in each of the four main strands of plot. The manipulation of various plots into a coherent ending makes an intricate design in which the artist's hand is everywhere evident.[5] Art metamorphoses chaos into proportion, by means of ritual, music, ceremony and dance.

Oberon is the principal artist-figure in the play; he and the other fairies represent magical nature, they are, to put it another way, art-in-nature. In them, the conventional distinction vanishes, and through them different art-forms produce a transformed social reality.

The ritual effect is expressed by Puck's incantation concluding Act III as he squeezes the herb of chastity on Lysander's eyelids:

> When thou wak'st
> Thou tak'st
> True delight
> In the sight
> Of thy former lady's eye;
> And the country proverb known,
> That every man should take his own,
> In your waking shall be shown:
> Jack shall have Jill;
> Naught shall go ill;
> The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.
>
> (III.ii.453-463)

All the victims of mismatching are made to sleep: then all are awakened into restored compatibility, each taking the partner who is socially appropriate. Regeneration requires symbolic death in the form of sleep, "death-counterfeiting sleep" (III.ii.364), as Oberon calls it. This is especially true for the lovers and Bottom, since the death-into-life ritual has a human meaning not really suitable for immortals like Titania. Oberon commands the newly awakened Titania to "strike more dead / Than common sleep of all these five the sense" (IV.i.85), emphasizing the profundity of this sleep. Its effect is to make the sleepers forget the chaos they have passed through. The new life into which they are awakened is epitomized by Theseus, who awakens them: it is a life of reason and decorum at court. Thus ritual transforms confusion into clarity.

Theseus is the chief motivating power behind the arts of music and ceremony as metamorphic agents. He begins the play with a musical metaphor that traces the emergence of order out of disorder, telling his wife-to-be:

> Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
> And won thy love doing thee injuries;
> But I will wed thee in another key,
> With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.
> (I.i.16-19)

The discord of war is changed into "another key" of ceremonial festivity. The hunting party that comes upon the sleeping lovers in Act IV converses in similar terms about hounds; Hippolyta recalls some Spartan hounds with which she once hunted which were virtually orchestral:

> Never did I hear
> Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
> The skies, the fountains, every region near
> Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
> So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
> (IV.i.117-121)

Theseus promises that his hounds, too, are "match'd in mouth like bells / Each under each" (IV.i.126-127). These music images sound the theme of chaos changed to order, beauty coming out of apparent deformity, at precisely the moment before the lovers are restored from the night world to Athens. The same kind of image appears in a reference to the artisans' proposed play:

> Merry and tragical? tedious and brief?
> That is hot ice and wondrous strange snow.

How shall we find the concord of this discord?
(IV.i.58-60)

Theseus supplies the answer to this rhetorical question himself in a one-line theory of audience participation that implies a blend of charity and imaginative consent to artistic illusion: "Our sport shall be to take what they mistake" (IV.i.90).

Actual music, as well as music imagery, also contributes to the metamorphosis of chaos into order. Fairy music charms the lovers into their deep sleep; the horns of Theseus' hunting party awaken them. At this point there is a coincidence in purpose of fairy and Athenian worlds, which for much of the play are alien to each other (Lysander and Hermia go to the wood to escape "the ancient privilege of Athens"--I.i.41). Theseus' announcement that "in the temple, by-and-by, with us, / These couples shall be eternally knit" (IV.i.183-184) is an unwitting echo of Oberon's earlier promise: " . . . back to Athens shall the lovers wend / With league whose date till death shall never end" (III.ii.372-373).

The marriage ceremony is a typical conclusion to Shakespeare's comedies; its unification of love and law aptly symbolizes a renewed society. In some of the plays, such as Measure for Measure, it is a psychologically improbable device that conforms to the expectations of a structural pattern, but in A Midsummer Night's Dream the marriages are made to seem inevitable. Their context is

the temple in Athens; in other words, a courtly, civil world safe from the errors of the night. As in Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos changefulness submits to a higher eternal order, though in A Midsummer Night's Dream "eternity" describes the quality of love within the marriage bond, divinely sanctioned, rather than a realm quite removed from everyday life.

Closely related to music and ceremony as a means of transforming discord into concord is the dance. J. R. Brown says that

> . . . dancing is the most eloquent stage action which Shakespeare used to celebrate concluding order and harmony. . . . [T]hey [Shakespeare's contemporaries] saw dancing as an analogy to the movement or 'music' of the spheres, a human figure of heavenly order and harmony.[6]

The awakening of Titania into new amity with Oberon is celebrated by a dance; at the conclusion of the artisans' play there is a "Bergomask" (V.i.369) in which the wedding parties presumably take part. And lastly, after all the mortals have gone to bed, the fairies leave their forest home for the first time to sing and dance their blessing--fortunate issue, lasting love, safe rest--in Theseus' palace. Thus the fairies, who have previously been the instruments of error, submit to and extend the metamorphosing process by which chaos becomes proportion.

The whole play, as Enid Welsford has shown,[7] has affinities with the masque form, whose essential movement is the dance. The central moment of the masque is the discovery of the masquers, when each one's true identity

is revealed. In A Midsummer Night's Dream the lovers' finding of their natural tastes or true selves corresponds to the discovery of masquers, and it is this discovery which the dance celebrates.

Various art forms, then, organize disparate elements into a symmetrical unity at the play's end. Yet those who are changed by art (and love) are incompletely aware of what has happened; the lovers' brief conversation upon awakening from charmed sleep shows how they have been distanced from the mythical world of the forest:

> Dem. These things seem small and indistinguishable,
> Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.
>
> Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
> When everything seems double.
>
> Hel. So methinks;
> And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
> Mine own, and not mine own.
>
> Dem. Are you sure
> That we are awake? It seems to me
> That yet we sleep, we dream.
>
> (IV.i.190-197)

This distance increases in the last Act, when the witty commentary of Demetrius and Lysander upon the artisans' play aligns them firmly with a similarly somewhat patronizing attitude taken by Theseus. But in the moment of half-consciousness immediately after waking the lovers do remember something; they see "with parted eye"--that is, with a double perception of mythic and rational worlds together, dream still penetrating into waking life.

At the end, it seems the lovers have forgotten

chaos and the mythic world in which it occurs. Theseus has not had any experience to remember, and lacking such experience, dismisses the lovers' story (what they recall of it) as "antique fables" and "fairy toys" (V.i.3). The audience, however, is not permitted to forget, for we see the mythic creatures move right into the house of the man who has just denied their existence.

The lovers and other mortals do not consciously integrate the dark transformations of the night into the harmony which they attain. The dream for them is not prophetic, but nonsensical; Theseus would agree with Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet, for whom dreams

> . . . are the children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
> Which is as thin of substance as the air,
> And more inconstant than the wind. . . .
> (Rom. & Jul. I.iv.97-100)

But Mercutio is proved wrong; Romeo's dream "of untimely death" (I.iv.111) tragically comes true. In A Midsummer Night's Dream Oberon intends that the lovers' experience "[s]hall seem a dream and fruitless vision" (III.ii.371) and Puck advises the audience to accept this response, and think ". . . this weak and idle theme, / No more yielding but a dream" (V.i.434-435). A Midsummer Night's Dream is not a tragedy and the only untimely deaths are the comical ones of "Pyramus" and "Thisbe." Nevertheless, the dream world, even in its darker and less harmonious aspects, is not entirely forgotten; the design is open-ended, both

more and less substantial than it seems, as I intend to show in the next (and last) chapter.

The Tempest

In A Midsummer Night's Dream chaos is metamorphosed into proportion by love and art working as impersonal processes, almost as principles in nature, though personified by such figures as Oberon and Theseus, who are rulers in their respective realms. In The Tempest art again appears as a principle in nature in the person of Ariel, but Ariel is the slave of Prospero: and Prospero is a human individual in control of a microcosm. When art appears in nature in The Tempest it always follows a personal, human intention. In turn, this human intention is mainly analogous to a Christian scheme of redemption through a merciful God. Thus art works on the levels of nature, humanity, and divinity--and all of these are centered upon the artist-figure Prospero.

"Canst thou remember / A time before we came unto this cell?" asks Prospero of Miranda. This is the aim of all his art: the past is to be re-membered--broken into pieces and put together again--for the sake of a renewed present and a new future. Individuals are locked into the patterns their past has imposed on them; these patterns must be shattered and new ones formed. Through art the past is broken and reformed; the occasional violence of this transformational process is manifested initially by the tempest. Wherever Prospero uses violence,

it is part of a ritual process, and ritual, in a broad sense, is an art form.

In Shakespeare's Mystery Play Colin Still has constructed an elaborate allegorical interpretation of The Tempest which sometimes leads him into absurdities; however, his main thesis, that The Tempest, like Dante's Divine Comedy, describes "a pilgrimage through Purgatory to Paradise" is substantiated by the play itself--though Shakespeare's paradise is not yet Dante's. The play is also, as Still says, an account of ritual initiation from darkness into light.[8]

The various trials that Prospero puts the court party through by his art are like ritual initiations into the mysteries of some religion. Unlike ordinary rituals, the participants are unaware or only semi-aware of their significnace, but like most rituals they are controlled situations intended to bring about a specific end--in this case, the contrition of the participants, and their reformation according to the values of a renewed society. The principle underlying ritual is that prescribed actions will bring about known results. Action involves bodily participation, and Prospero knows that, even if the results of his art cannot be known for certain, he must involve the whole man, body and mind.

The first ritual initiation is the immersion of everyone aboard the king's ship, with the exception of the crew (who have no immediate place in Prospero's

design), into the sea. Water, and the sea in particular, are archetypes for the source of life. Water also purifies; its ritualistic significance, then, is renewal of life purged of grossness and evil. The sea is an obvious context for change, being itself always in flux. In Ovid's Metamorphoses, Ino, driven by madness, leaps off a cliff with her child in her arms, into the sea. At Venus' request Neptune changes them into gods: " . . . he left them / A hault and stately majestie: and altring them in hew / With shape and names moste meete for Goddes he did them both endew" (IV.667-669). Ovid's transformations, of course, have no environmental limitation. But Venus bases her request on her special rights in the sea, it being her birth-place: "Of right even here to mee some favour doth belong / At least wise if amid the Sea engendred erst I were / Of Froth . . . " (IV.663-665). The sea has an engendering power, the power to bring forth life, personified by Venus, goddess of love (though this is not Venus' function in The Tempest). The sea changes mortal shapes into divine ones.

But in The Tempest all ritual, including the "baptism" at the beginning, is first experienced by the subjects of it as loss. The soaked mariners speak rather for the others than for themselves when they cry: "All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!" (I.i.54). There is not a soul--including the cynical pair of Antonio and Sebastian--who does not play "[s]ome tricks of desperation"

(I.ii.30). This is the first stage in Prospero's attempt to make his enemies remember what they have done, for he forces them to live through the same experiences he lived through at their hands twelve years before: he lost a dukedom, so shall Antonio; he was exposed to the roaring sea, so shall the court party be exposed. The analogy works positively as well: Providence brought Prospero to safety, so shall he bring his enemies to safety; he was changed by his experience (from naive carelessness to a sharp knowledge of human nature), and they shall be changed (from ignorance to knowledge of themselves).

The court party, then, is lost to the sea but cast up on land once more. Their responses to this initiation vary according to the character of each; the good Gonzalo is first in awareness, then the brooding Alonso, and finally the cynical Sebastian and Antonio. Ferdinand, separated from the main party, is on a level with Gonzalo; because of their superior awareness and innocence, they can pass with relative ease through the ritual initiations, and, indeed, are mostly spared them.

Gonzalo's superior awareness is shown in his quick apprehension of the sea-change he has undergone:

> . . . the rarity of it is--which is indeed almost beyond credit . . . [t]hat our garments, being, as they were, drench'd in the sea, hold, notwithstanding, their freshness and gloss, being rather new-dy'd than stain'd with salt water.
>
> (II.i.59-64)

In many of Shakespeare's plays clothing is a metaphor for the state of being of its wearer--it can be a disguise

which differs from his inner being (such as that worn by Rosalind in As You Like It and numerous other heroines in the comedies); it can be the essence of a man, thereby showing his superficiality ("The soul of this man is his clothes," says Lafew of Parolles in All's Well that Ends Well --I.v.48); it can indicate an inner renewal, as with King Lear (IV.vii.) and Pericles (V.i.216). This latter meaning is true for The Tempest; Gonzalo rightly perceives (we know he is right; we have Ariel's word for it--"On their sustaining garments not a blemish, / But fresher than before"--I.ii.218-219) that something wonderful has happened, though he does not as yet connect the outward change with an inner.[9] The mockery of Sebastian and Antonio, their failure to be awed, indicates their failure of understanding. They do not even know they are being initiated, much less the goal of that initiation. This damning ignorance is emphasized by the faint knowledge they do have: the sea-change metaphor is placed into Antonio's mouth, too, but he perverts its intended effect to the opposite of that intention:

> We were all sea-swallowed, though some cast again,
> And, by that destiny, to perform an act
> Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come,
> In yours and my discharge.
> (II.i.251-254)

"Some cast again"--the first meaning of "cast" is "thrown," but another is possible: "chosen to act in a play." Antonio and Sebastian have indeed been chosen to act in

Prospero's "play"--but they fail to identify him as the instrument of their destiny. They are locked into a pattern of eternal getting, and mistake this unquenchable desire for freedom. The acting metaphor also implies a kind of transformation in which the actor "becomes" someone else--but this subject shall be discussed later.

Not all of Prospero's subjects, then, are made of yielding stuff; the failure of some willingly to participate in ritual is a dark portent of their future, and an early sign that art's metamorphic effect has limitations.

The sea is an agent of change; the island is a context for change. It has no specific geographical location, thus increasing its symbolic possibilities: "The action of the play takes place on a deliberately unidentifiable island, the kind of place where transfiguration is possible."[10] Like the forest in A Midsummer Night's Dream it is a mythic world in which nature acts magically, but, unlike the forest, it is a rather barren place, where Trinculo, seeking shelter from an imminent storm, finds "neither bush nor shrub to bear off any weather at all" (II.ii.18-19). True, images of plants, fruits and animals frequently appear, but it has been noted that "these are mostly brought into relation with physical pain, threats of punishment, trouble and distress."[11] The richness and luxuriousness of nature in A Midsummer Night's Dream is missing, and this difference corresponds to that between the two wielders of supernatural powers, Oberon

almost a personification of amoral nature and Prospero very consciously artificial in his relation to nature. In A Midsummer Night's Dream the theme of metamorphosis depends largely on a background of the organic metamorphoses of nature; in The Tempest metamorphosis is wrought by nature that has itself been transformed into art. The sudden, Ovidian transformations that characterize an almost chaotic, though finally benign, nature in A Midsummer Night's Dream are what Prospero fears--the metamorphosis he wants to bring about is deliberate, controlled, artificial.

Sometimes the distinction between an independently magical nature and an artificially controlled nature on the island is hard to discern. Sensitive perceptions find the island a wondrous place. Here is the view of the courtier Adrian, with the derisive comments of Antonio and Sebastian omitted:

> Though this island seem to be desert . . . [u]ninhabitable and almost inaccessible . . . [y]et . . . [i]t must needs be of subtle, tender, and delicate temperence . . . . . The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
>
> (II.i.35-46)

Literally, then, there is a wonderful "air" about the island that may or may not be Prospero's doing. Given the fact that the island was once under the control of Caliban's witch mother Sycorax, however, it is unlikely that Adrian would have found the air sweet had he come upon the island while she exercised control. More probably he would have found the "unwholesome fen" and

blistering "south-west" that Caliban associates with her (I.ii.321-324). So it is magic, black or white, that makes the island more than natural. Nature becomes art, rather than the other way around, and the art that works through nature is particularly violent, as in the tempest or the urchins and hounds that plague Caliban and the two clowns. This white magic is rough, but it has to be, in order to overcome the chaos imbedded in human nature.[12]

The island is a setting for ritualistic change, rather than the agent of such change. After the first initiation of sea-swallowing, the court party is subjected to a deep sleep, much like that of the lovers in A Midsummer Night's Dream, except that here the death-into-life ritual is only foreshadowed, not completed. In The Tempest sleep renders the court party--all except Antonio and Sebastian--utterly vulnerable to evil. In sleep there is a letting go of the conscious mind that resembles a death of the will, and here it is a kind of test of susceptibility to grace in the future. For the present, the ritual is incomplete, abruptly interrupted by Ariel's whispered warning into Gonzalo's ear. Antonio and Sebastian fail this ritual initiation, too:

> Seb. What a strange drowsiness possesses them!
>
> Ant. It is the quality o' th' climate.
>
> Seb. Why
> Doth it not then our eyelids sink? I find not
> Myself dispos'd to sleep.
>
> Ant. Nor I. My spirits are nimble.

They fell together all, as by consent.
They dropp'd as by a thunder-stroke.
(II.i.198-204)

Antonio's and Sebastian's separation shows their unconscious lack of consent, their inability to "die." As before, they parody Prospero's meaning and invert the sleep metaphor: when Antonio suggests the murder of Alonso, Sebastian observes: "Thou dost snore distinctly; / There's meaning in thy snores" (II.i.217-218). The resemblance of sleep to death has the same negative meaning: "Say this were death / That now hath seiz'd them, why, they were no worse / Than now they are" (II.i.260-262). And if any birth is to occur it will have nothing to do with regeneration but will resemble lust conceiving to bring forth death and sin, as in Paradise Lost: "The setting of thine eye and cheek proclaim / A matter from thee; and a birth, indeed" (II.i.229-231), Sebastian tells Antonio.

In approximately the middle of the play's action, Prospero "tempts" the court party into a third ritual. As before, Alonso, who feels the deepest sense of loss, is most open to Prospero's art. There is a closer bond between these two men--both kings, both fathers--than between any others in the play. What follows is Prospero's most splendid demonstration of his art up to this point; it is as far as he can go in controlling the court party's will without taking their freedom away entirely. This is the stage direction:

> Solemn and strange music; and Prospero on the top (invisible). Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations; and, inviting the King &c. to eat, they depart.
>
> (III.iii.s.d.)

Alonso and Gonzalo are amazed; Alonso especially is awe-struck before a spectacle that has a supernatural, personal meaning for him. Even Antonio and Sebastian are credulous enough to make a comparison to the Pheonix legend, though their attitude is more superficial astonishment than reverence ("A living drollery," says Sebastian--III.iii. 21). And when the "Shapes" vanish, Sebastian does not bother to speculate on their significance, as do Gonzalo and Alonso--instead, his concern is to fill his stomach. When the party decides to eat there is thunder and lightning, and Ariel appears in the shape of a harpy and causes the banquet to vanish.

The banquet scene is a type of the Communion sacrament.[13] The classic signs of a comic resolution are all present: characters are assembled together, harmonious music sounds, a communal table is laid out. But this ritual, like the preceding sleep, is interrupted, as though the invitation and its sudden, almost hellish withdrawal were meant to shock the would-be participants into new awareness. Ritual characteristically involves the whole man, mind (or spirit) and body: thus its withdrawal has the effect of a bodily jolt and mental distraction--"I have made you mad; / And even with such-like valour men hang and drown / Their proper selves,"

declares Ariel (III.iii.58-59). Immediately prior to this scene Antonio and Sebastian have plotted to murder Alonso that night; obviously true communion cannot exist among them and the others. The suggestion of communion prefigures Fifth-Act reconciliations; its interruption is a reminder that those involved are not yet ready to be reconciled. And this aborted communion is also the occasion for remembrance: "But remember . . . " Ariel tells the "three men of sin" (III.iii.53)--and goes on to list the crimes they have done, and the repentance that is necessary to save them from continuing punishment: "nothing but heart's sorrow / And a clear life ensuing" (III.iii.81-82). The responses to this judgment range from Alonso's suicidal despair to Antonio's and Sebastian's refusal to accept condemnation and foolish attempt to fight the spirits who have confronted them.

The last ritual initiation is imprisonment in a magic circle where the court party is frozen while Prospero once more reiterates the wrongs which have been committed. This, in Act V, is the third time the story has been told. Prospero's passion is that the past--history as dissolution of order--must be remembered so that it will not be repeated. This explains his continued insistence that Miranda listen in Act I. The audience, of course, is also reminded: and the "mirror" scenes in which Caliban and the clowns foolishly imitate the ambitions of their superiors make the point once

more. Remember. The imprisonment is a prelude to freedom, and in this instance, unlike before, metaphors of enlightenment appear:

> The charm dissolves apace;
> And as the morning steals upon the night,
> Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
> Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reason.
> (V.i.64-68)

> Their understanding
> Begins to swell, and the approaching tide
> Will shortly fill the reasonable shore
> That now lies foul and muddy.
> (79-82)

From a state of darkness, of "ignorant fumes," of being "foul and muddy" the rituals have transformed the participants into enlightenment and clear reason. Or have they? Seeing that the others do not know him, Prospero performs his least spectacular, but most extreme "trick," changing his magic robe for the garment of humanity: "I will discase me, and myself present / As I was sometime Milan" (V.i.85-86). His only hope of making the transformation of the court party complete is to transform himself, become weak and human as they are. He must abandon his art. The sense of supernatural mystery hinging on the paradox of the great becoming weak in order to redeem fallen man, which is faintly foreshadowed in A Midsummer Night's Dream in Bottom's recollection of his dream-experience with Titania, is here in The Tempest made explicit. Heretofore Prospero has

been living in a kind of transcendent state--"transported / And rapt in secret studies," as he says (I.ii.76-77)--but in this scene he shuns this private transcendence by submitting himself to an ideal of social unity.

But the princes of the world--Antonio and Sebastian--remain unmoved. During the reconciliation scene they are aloof and silent; later they mock Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban, but neither of them ever acknowledges either their wrong-doing or Prospero's forgiveness. Antonio is forgiven twice (though each time with some bitterness) but says nothing. The will to power that leads to chaos appears ineradicable.

Yet there are some who are changed--most notably, Alonso. Several of the ritual initiations are introduced or ended by noise or music, and Alonso is especially sensitive to this art-form as an agent of change. As in A Midsummer Night's Dream the metamorphic process is shown as the turning of discord into concord, though in The Tempest discord itself helps produce desired change. Thus the "tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning" (I.i.s.d.) opening the play shall later be turned into harmonious music, but is also part of the "tempering" those aboard the ship must undergo.

In the next scene, Ferdinand, whose fate is closely bound up with Alonso's, appears, led by Ariel's song. He describes what happened after he first came onto the island:

> Sitting on a bank,
> Weeping again the King my father's wrack,
> This music crept by me upon the waters,
> Allaying both their fury and my passion
> With its sweet air.
> (I.ii.389-393)

The essence of this calming music, like the essence of the storm it allays, is Ariel: "Ariel <u>is</u> song; when he is truly himself, he sings."[14] In one of his aspects, Ariel is the art which Prospero controls. Ferdinand is the first upon whom music has a calming effect over passion; his ears are granted this privilege because of his youthful innocence and his open, compassionate nature, shown by the tears he weeps for the father he thinks lost.[15] The invitation to dance in Ariel's song ("Come unto these yellow sands, / And then take hands"--I.ii.375-376) prefigures the harmonious social order Ferdinand and Miranda will represent at the end of the play.

In the same way, the song immediately following is a prophecy:

> Full fadom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes;
> Nothing of him that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange;
> Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell"
> <u>Burthen</u>. Ding-dong.
> Hark! now I hear them--Ding-dong bell.
> (I.ii.396-404)

Alonso, at the moment this is sung, is wandering about the island looking for Ferdinand, whom he believes

drowned. The "sea-change," obviously, is not confined to the actual sea; the sea's symbolic influence permeates everything. The song says that Alonso is drowned: this is the symbolic death he must experience so that he may be changed. Richard Cody states the principle underlying the song: "If the end of life is to make a work of art out of human nature--and Shakespeare as well as Tasso suggests it is--then the means of doing so may be death,"[16]

Ferdinand does not understand the song symbolically. "This ditty does remember my drown'd father," he says (I.ii.405), thereby sounding the theme of art as remembrance. But the young prince takes Ariel's meaning literally, as a confirmation of his father's death, and in part this is correct, for the future of Naples belongs to Ferdinand, not Alonso.[17] But for the audience the song gives the theme of the metamorphosis of unruly life into the permanence of art.

Music is also an essential part of the ritual initiations, having the power to compel the hearers to react as Prospero would have them react. It is Ariel's "solemn music" (II.i.s.d.) that causes the court party to fall asleep, and his song in Gonzalo's ear awakens them. Again, "[s]olemn and strange music" (III.iii. s.d.) introduces the banquet, as does the gentle dance of the strange Shapes. Thunder and lightning remind the court party that the time is not yet ripe for true harmony, but this harmony still insists upon itself; after Ariel

pronounces judgment the Shapes enter to soft music once more, and dance. The conflict between harmony and noise occurs again in the next Act, in which Ferdinand and Miranda witness the singing and dancing of the masque--which is interrupted by "a strange, hollow, and confused noise" (IV.i. s.d.). The main function of music and dance in The Tempest is to transform tempests external and internal into calm, and to show the divine pattern resulting from this transformation. But this function is frequently interrupted by new eruptions of tempestuousness; the power of music and dance is tentative.

Ariel's last song ("Where the bee sucks, there suck I"--V.i.88) is the only music which does not directly affect the other characters in the play; it is a little vision of the Elysium that will be his after Prospero sets him free. But it does make a counterpoint to Prospero's re-entry into the historical world, for it is sung while Ariel helps his master put on his ducal robes. Ariel is freed into the mythic world; Prospero gives up the freedom residing in his magical power, and with this freedom, his dream of Paradise. Here music accompanies the transformation from "divine" into human.

In relation to Prospero, Ariel's song is ironic: another, somewhat different ironic application of music occurs in the scenes with the clowns and Caliban. Just as their drunkenness parodies the quasi-religious transcendence that Prospero wants to produce, so their songs

are opposite to Ariel's in their gross crudity. But Ariel's have infinitely more power; they surpass the clowns' "[a]s great'st does least" (III.ii.111). After discussing their plot to murder Prospero and rape Miranda, Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban are in a jocund mood, and Stephano sings. The tune is imitated on a tabor and pipe by Ariel, who is invisible, causing Stephano and Trinculo to think that a devil is about. They sense a judgment implicit in this weird music ("O, forgive me my sins!" cries Trinculo--III.ii.140), and their defiant response anticipates that of Sebastian and Antonio in the following judgment scene--though the clowns are much more fearful. Ariel's song is also the occasion for an unusual speech by Caliban:

> Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
> Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices
> That, if I then had wak'd after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
> The clouds methought would open and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me, that, when I wak'd,
> I cried to dream again.
>
> (III.ii.143-152)

Caliban is capable of imagining transcendence, although his waking imagination is pathetically poor, taking Stephano as a god. But in his sleep even he is open to the vision of richness that Prospero prepares for those who are capable of seeing it. Robert Langbaum says that Shakespeare "seems to be telling us that every

creature can be judged by its potential metamorphoses,"[18] and that Caliban can only imagine transformation into animal forms, "barnacles, or . . . apes / With foreheads villanous low" (IV.i.249-250). But here there is an indication that art has power even over the bestial Caliban--perhaps more than Prospero knows. But this music could never reform Caliban, since he does not know its source; and if he did, he would revile it. Almost immediately after Caliban's reverie on music comes Prospero's frustrated outburst: "A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick!" (IV.i.188-19). Caliban is an incarnation of intractable chaos, which recognizes art's superiority and even its beauty, but which still remains beyond art's reach. Prospero is outraged that his art hardly touches the monster, but he is not wrathful when Antonio and Sebastian show no signs of change--therefore it is apparent that his rage is not caused solely by the limitations of his art. The deeper reason has to do with the conflict between spirit and matter represented by Prospero and his slave.

Another art-form used by Prospero in his war against chaos is ceremony, although ceremony does not so much transform chaos as guard against it. After Ferdinand has endured the wood-carrying test which placed him temporarily on the level with the lowly Caliban Prospero grants him the gift of Miranda, but with a severe warning:

> If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
> All sanctimonious ceremonies may
> With full and holy rite be minist'red,
> No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall
> To make this contract grow; but barren hate,
> Sour-ey'd disdain, and discord shall bestrew
> The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
> That you shall hate it both. Therefore take heed
> As Hymen's lamp shall light you!
> (IV.i.15-23)

In A Midsummer Night's Dream Diana's flower ameliorated the effect of love-in-idleness to create a unity of passion and restraint that was consecrated by marriage. Here passion is submerged by restraint; the Lord of Misrule shall not have his chance at the throne. Prospero may be wary because his previous trust of Antonio caused Antonio to fall: in the Paradise (as Ferdinand calls it--IV.i.124) he has made for the lovers there shall be no fall. Even the purity of Ferdinand and Miranda is in need of protection, from dark forces both inner and outer. Caliban's punishment on the island is for his illicit attempt upon Miranda's virtue, and his remark to Stephano--"She will become thy bed, I warrant, and bring thee forth brave brood" (III.ii.113-114)--shows that her purity is not safe from threat. The marriage ceremony offers lawful protection against such threats, but it is more relevant to the participants. In his warning Prospero makes ceremony a condition for fertility. In A Midsummer Night's Dream the fairies give their blessing of fertility to the marriage beds after the weddings, and the lovers are kept from consummation until marriage; but in The Tempest

chastity has a holy, magical power against bestiality, a power which shall yield only to ceremony, which is to replace it. Hymen, the god of marriage, represents the harmony and enlightenment of the ceremonious life, as well as social atonement. "Peace ho!" declares Hymen in As You Like It, "I bar confusion" (V.iv.131).

The heavenly blessing bestowed by ceremony contrasts with the unceremonious life represented by Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, the excremental nature of which is evident in Stephano's remark when he draws Trinculo out from under Caliban's garment--"How cam'st thou to be the siege of this mooncalf? Can he vent Trinculos?" (II.ii.110-111)--and in their "baptism" in the "filthy mantled pool" ((IV.i.182) that causes them to "smell all horse-piss" (IV.i.199). There could hardly be a greater contrast to the ethereal masque witnessed by Ferdinand and Miranda.

In the last scene, all the subjects of Prospero's art, from lowest to highest, are drawn together, Prospero makes himself known and extends forgiveness, and the "miracle" of Ferdinand and Miranda focuses the situation upon delicately proportioned beauty. Gonzalo's eulogy seems appropriate:

> O, rejoice
> Beyond a common joy, and set it down
> With gold on lasting pillars: In one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand her brother found a wife
> Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom
> In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves

When no man was his own.
(V.i.206-213)

If each man has indeed found himself after being lost, then the artful permanence and symmetry signified by "gold on lasting pillars" has been achieved. This is the case with Ferdinand and Miranda, but they have been altered little or not at all by Prospero's art. Alonso, of all the court party, is most completely transformed. His response after hearing Ariel's judgment pronounced bears out the prophecy of "Full fadom five," which spoke of a sea-change accompanied by music--only in Alonso's distressed state, the transcendent quality of this change is as yet not recognized:

> O, it is monstrous, monstrous:
> Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;
> The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
> That deep and dreadful organ pipe, pronounc'd
> The name of Prosper. It did bass my trespass.
> Therefore my son i' th' ooze is bedded; and
> I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded
> And with him there lie mudded.
> (III.iii.95-102)

Part of this theme is repeated later when Alonso hears that Prospero has "lost" a daughter and wishes that she and his son

> . . . were living both in Naples,
> The King and Queen there! That they were, I wish
> Myself were mudded in that oozy bed
> Where my son lies.
> (V.i.149-152)

The idea of transformation is inchoate in both of these

speeches, in the metaphor that turns thunder into an organ pipe, in the "oozy bed" of the sea where birth as well as death can happen. The ooze suggests a primeval chaos, but this chaos is transformed into a rich beauty, as Ariel's song in the first Act says.

Rose Zimbardo thinks that this transformation

> . . . is not one of regeneration into something more nobly human . . . there is nothing here that suggests fertility, rather the human and impermanent is transfixed into a rich permanence, but a lifeless one.[19]

There is, indeed, a desire for peaceful death in Alonso that corresponds with Prospero's weariness of life. But in fact Alonso <u>does</u> become more nobly human, in him there is "heart's sorrow" and the promise of "a clear life ensuing": his restoration of the dukedom to Prospero is a free act; and through Ferdinand he is connected with the promise of fertility. At the same time, he more than anyone recognizes that the court party has been in touch with a non-human, transforming power which makes order out of disorder: ". . . there is in this business more than nature / Was ever conduct of" (V.i.243-244). His repeated use of the word "strange" in the last Act establishes the rightness of the metaphor in Ariel's song: "Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange." That "nothing" becomes "something" is a serious word-play marking a change from uncreated to new-created. The song outlines the ideal of art, but art's permanence need not be lifeless; it can be an image of eternal life, a mythic realm

created by art in which the cycles of history do not interfere. This myth appears in Pericles, for example, in the music of the spheres that he hears when his daughter Marina is restored to him, or in the coming to life of Hermione's "statue" in The Winter's Tale. In these last plays Shakespeare offers a vision of a world outside the threat of chaos and mutability. And yet it is apparent that this eternal vision is not all-encompassing and that history shall have its due.

CHAPTER VI

"THE POET'S EYE": SHAKESPEARE'S MYTH OF THE IMAGINATION

"The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact," says Theseus--and there is a sense in which Shakespeare proves him right. In characterizing the madman as the victim of an overwrought imagination Theseus is voicing traditional Elizabethan psychology--the term was interchangeable with "fantasy" and even "fancy," and all of them referred to a mental category that had "widespread disrepute . . . as a falsifying and misguiding faculty."[1] Similarly, the lover's fancy, or imagination, makes him act as though he were mad; and the poet, from ancient times, has a reputation for divine madness because he seems inspired by unearthly forces. In Shakespearean comedy lovers are often mocked because of their fancies; and the Shakespearean character nearest to representing a poet in anything more than a cursory way--Hamlet--is mad, or feigns madness.

But the courtly lover's stylized "madness" and the poet's controlled and conscious imaginings, though they may resemble the madman's state of mind, are not identical to it. The metamorphic design that love and art create is, as this study of A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest has shown, more coherent than the pro-

ductions of lunacy. It has, to be sure, something of the unstable quality of dream, but the dream is compelling, and speaks to a deeper level of consciousness than that of waking common sense. Dream and myth have a common ground, as Jung has shown, in the archetypal images which appear in them, and in their apparent irrationality, which admits of myriad transformations. The forest world of A Midsummer Night's Dream is, as the title of the play tells us, a dream-world--and it is also, as I have tried to show, a mythic world. Much the same is true for the island of The Tempest.

These plays are notable in Shakespeare's canon as the only ones in which fairies or spirits (not ghosts) appear on stage with the same existential validity as the other characters. They embody "the mind's proclivity to court its own omnipotence"[2]--in other words, the imagination. They are actors in a myth: Shakespeare's myth of the imagination, which says that love and art transform chaos into constancy, and lift individuals above their mundane limitations onto a plane of social harmony. Northrop Frye has said that "[i]magination exists in all areas of human activity, but in three of particular importance, the arts, love and religion."[3] Shakespeare's myth of the imagination depends upon love and art; the function of religion is largely subsumed by these two, and is given no individual attention, although myth-making itself may be seen as a kind of religious act.

Like myth generally, the myth of the imagination is fundamentally involved with creation--deaths and endings, therefore, are initiations to new births and beginnings; "whatever man does is in some way a repetition of the pre-eminent 'deed,' the archetypal gesture of the Creator God, the Creation of the World."[4] In Shakespeare's myth, since his means is theatre, the goal is to create an illusory world on the stage. This creation is widely shared: by set designer, costumer, actors, director, the poet, the audience. Since set design and costuming are relatively unimportant in most of Shakespeare's theatre, the latter four creators of illusion are the ones who play parts in the myth. (In those plays in which set design and costuming are significant--as they may have been in The Tempest as acted at Whitehall--these elements are visible but silent; their "voice" in the myth is seen. In any case, they are not keys to the imagination, but only aids.) The actor-director-poet can be a single figure; the audience is played by several actors in a structural device usually called the play within the play.

In A Midsummer Night's Dream the artist-figure, as I shall call him for simplicity's sake, is the King of the Shadows, Oberon, who "directs" the lovers in their forest adventure; and the play within the play is the Athenian draftsmen's "Pyramus and Thisbe." In The Tempest the artist-figure is Prospero and the play within the play is the masque he presents for Ferdinand and Miranda. In

these cases, as elsewhere in Shakespeare where similar figures and devices appear, a quality of "innerness" is achieved, a sense of art commenting upon art, or illusion upon illusion. It may be a mocking comment, as in A Midsummer Night's Dream, or one that acknowledges the enormous power of the imagination, as does "The Mousetrap" in Hamlet, or a combined mocking and admiration, as in The Tempest. The tone of the comment generally depends upon the play within the play's resemblance to life or nature; if, in the words of the Poet in Timon of Athens, "[i]t tutors nature" and is "livelier than life" (I.i.37-38), then the device vindicates imagination's power as being equal and even superior to life itself. Presumably this superiority would reside in the perfection of the play, that is, its coherence and significance, which is greater than life's, or at least more apparent. On the other hand, if the play within the play fails as an illusion, the implied comment is that the larger play is only an imperfect imitation of nature. As a device in the myth of the imagination, the play within the play may either support or undermine the idea of art's power.

The myth principally states the relationship of art to life, but it also reaches outside of itself to explore the relationship of life to art. Its basic metaphor is that the stage is a "world," but this is intimately involved with the reverse metaphor, very common in Shakespeare, that the world is a stage. The idea that

the world is a stage generally reduces life's value, for the emphasis in this mataphor is on illusion and transience.

> A sense of futility, of the vanity or folly of human ambition, is characteristic of all meditative Elizabethan comparisons of the world to a stage. Even at their most cheerful, such descriptions manage to mock the seriousness of man's pursuits, to point out the somehow ludicrous nature of his perpetual activity.[5]

If life's value is reduced by its comparison to drama, the implication is that drama itself is essentially vain mock-seriousness. But in this version of the metaphor, since both life and drama are reduced, there is no necessary judgment on the superiority of one or the other.

Shakespeare's myth, then, both elevates and reduces imagination--and life. Love and art transform nothing into something, and this "something" is perfect in its own right. The imagination magically, i.e., mythically, transforms the ordinary world into Paradise, in a sort of wish-fulfillment dream. This quality of wish-fulfillment seems to reside in the form of romantic comedy, and is reflected in Shakespeare's comedies by the very titles: _As You Like It_, _All's Well that Ends Well_, _What You Will_ (the alternative title for _Twelfth Night_). Nature itself may seem to share the human wish for Paradise, so affecting events that love and art are united with nature in creating a harmonious conclusion.

But at the same time there is an awareness that the creation of love and art is only an insubstantial illusion, that nature is a desert and a place of exile for civilized man, that the indulgence in wish-fulfillment

dreams does not afford protection against real evil, and that chaos is still a rough shape that can break down the gates of Paradise. Transcendence and corruption are both parts of the myth.

This constant ambivalence has the effect of placing the myth itself on trial: how valid are the products of the imagination? The audience is both prisoner and judge at the trial: insofar as it allows itself to be "captured" by the illusion, it is a voluntary prisoner, but insofar as it dissociates itself from the illusion with the knowledge that "it is only play," it is a judge. Being captured by the illusion, however, is paradoxically transcendence to a free state; the audience is translated into a play-world removed from the exigencies of life :

> We go to the theatre because we feel drawn to go toward the unreal. And we feel this gravitation because man's life is a prison (such as Plato described, such as Calderon described) and the theatre takes us out of this prison of "reality " by making us inexistent, taking us outside of life until we ourselves become a little "unreal."[6]

The sense of being "unreal" depends on involvement in the spirit of play, whose basic law (as in myth) is that one thing becomes another; play is metaphor. The theatre, similarly, is metaphor; the actor becomes Hamlet, the stage becomes a world. Becoming, or metamorphosis, is at the heart of dramatic illusion. Further, it is at the heart of all idealistic life, for man hopes to become other than he is; he is an "existential metaphor."[7] The theatre shows the possibility of metamorphosis by the

way in which its art involves us--that is, it transforms us into inhabitants of a perfect play-world in which the imagination dominates over logic, in which things are as we want them to be. This is especially true of the romance form. Sidney said that true poets "imitate both to delight and teach";[8] the transcendent effect is one of delight rather than learning. The imaginative vision belongs more to the senses than to the intellect; the moral lesson and rational meaning of the play, though important, are not essential to enjoying the play as play. In addition, when the escape into the "unreal" is general, when the audience as a whole is delighted, a temporary community is formed whose common ground is that everyone has agreed to play. This community feeling is part of imaginative transcendence, since the individual knows that his experience goes beyond his individuality. Elizabethan drama is not far removed in years from drama as religious ritual; the community feeling may be a connecting point. In Homo Ludens, an examination of the play element in Western culture, Johan Huizinga finds that "[o]nly the drama, because of its intrinsically functional character, its quality of being an action, remains permanently linked to play"--and the concept of play, in turn, "merges quite naturally with that of holiness,"[9] as any line of tragedy would show. Or, I might add, a Shakespearean romantic comedy or tragi-comedy.

But Shakespeare's myth also discovers the source

of its power--illusion--and laughs at it, or demonstrates that it is inferior to reality: for even if reality itself is an illusion, it is one that ends in death, to which all realities and illusions alike must submit. There is no permanent transcendence in this life, the audience changes not at all, chaos and corruption are unredeemed by art. The myth confesses its own limitations. And its over-all statement on the condition of man is typical of the Renaissance: man is an angel and a beast, an Oberon and a Bottom, or an Ariel and a Caliban. The poet's eye glances from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven.

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The play within the play is a structural device that can show either the success or failure of art's illusion: in A Midsummer Night's Dream the Athenian craftsmen's play shows the failure of drama; but there is another, less obvious, play within the play that shows illusion's success--this is the "play" which Oberon directs, the story of the night. This play basically involves the lovers, beginning when they enter the wood and ending when they are awakened from sleep by Theseus' horns. The love-juice causes the lovers to become other than what they were, makes them into existential metaphors. The juice symbolizes the power of fancy, i.e., love heightened by the imagination. But imagination's power here is so great that its victims cannot make any distinction between belief and make-belief--they are

players unaware that they are only playing. But the fairies know: hence Puck calls this drama a "fond pageant" (III.ii.114) and Oberon commands him to play the parts of Demetrius and Lysander for a time (III.ii.360-362). The scenes in which Oberon influences the action and then watches the results while standing aside, "invisible," also have the effect of making the lovers' confusions seem like a play at which the spectators have superior knowledge to the players'.

In the forest, the myth of the imagination is supreme: the transformations of love and art are phenomenal, miraculous. Illusion's victory is total, but for one failure--Bottom. For Bottom's part in the pageant is played by an actor who refuses to lose his identity; his outward change is merely a confirmation of who he is. The same inability to be transformed is the most notable feature of the craftsmen's play in which Bottom is the chief actor. In the first place, these rough players expect too much of the spectators' imagination, making some of their company play a wall, or moonshine--objects which can hardly be convincingly imitated since they are so far from being humanoid. But the craftsmen, undeterred, play Wall and Moonshine as though they <u>were</u> humanoid, endowing them with human qualities (the wall is "sinister") and giving them lines to speak. In the part of Moonshine, the actor tries to rectify this difficulty by representing the man in the moon, but, since the lantern he is

holding is meant to represent the moon itself, "[t]his is the greatest error of all the rest," as Theseus says (V. i,250). Hippolyta's impatient exclamation, "I am aweary of this moon. Would he would change!" (V.i.256) underlines the fact that the actor does not make the transformation that drama depends upon.

In the second place, the craftsmen's primitive fear that they will become what they play, and their assumption that the audience shares this fear, show their failure to understand the doubleness characteristic of play-acting, which pretends to be other but always knows (and knows that the audience knows) it is only pretending. Lest the ladies fear, the "lion" announces that he is really "one Snug the joiner" (V.i.226). This is ludicrous because the audience, especially a sophisticated court audience, needs no reminding that the actor is not actually the person--or, in this case, animal--whom he plays: the problem generally is rather to get the audience to participate in the pretense. It is even more ludicrous in this instance because the player is so woefully inadequate to the task of making an illusion.

The failure of the craftsmen's play is further compounded in that it is intended to be a tragedy. Tragedy's cathartic effect depends upon the identification of spectator with tragic figure, but such identification is impossible when the actor himself is unable to "become" his character. In "Pyramus and Thisbe" the

naivete of the players and the bombast of the poetry turn passion into foolishness; Bottom as Pyramus indeed "out-Herods Herod":

> Approach, ye Furies fell:
> O Fates, come, come:
> Cut thread and thrum;
> Quail, crush, conclude and quell!
> (V.i.289-292)

The result of failed tragedy is unintended comedy.

The play within the play can also be seen as the failure to turn chaos into form. Peter Quince, who is the play's author and director, gives the prologue, which Hippolyta describes as resembling a child's playing on a recorder: "a sound, but not in government" (V.i.123-124). An excerpt from the prologue proves this judgment to be accurate:

> Our true intent is. All for your delight,
> We are not here. That you should here repent you,
> The actors are at hand.
> (V.i.114-116)

If the discord of this "recorder's" sound is to become concord, it will only happen through the charitable imaginations of the audience. That the play is a kind of primeval, chaotic little world is suggested also by the references to its insubstantiality: "We are not here," says Peter Quince; "it is nothing, nothing is the world," according to the Master of Revels Philostrate (V.i.78). It is nothing because it never gets born; the necessary transformations do not occur.

The audience to this non-play takes a paternalistic, superior attitude, interrupting frequently with witty remarks that emphasize the clumsiness of the attempted illusion. Even Demetrius and Lysander are now so distanced from their forest madness that the plight of Pyramus and Thisbe and the wildly exaggerated rhetoric seems to them to have only a comic meaning--whereas their own experience was quite similar. As Demetrius mocks the artisans, calling them "asses" (V.i.155), so Puck mocked the lovers: "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" (III.ii.115).

The speech on imagination by Theseus which precedes the craftsmen's play denies the validity of imagination's illusion, thus presenting in theory what the players present in practice:

> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.
>
> (V.i.14-17)

Theseus means that the poet is a liar who pretends that nothing can be something. It needs only a slight alteration in perspective to give these words an opposite import: the poet is a creator who can miraculously make a convincing something out of an apparent nothing. The "forms of things unknown" could be Platonic forms, the essential world or divine Nature which only the artist can produce, since fallen nature is only brazen.

This positive note appears in Hippolyta's answer

to Theseus:

> But all the story of the night told over,
> And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
> More witnesseth than fancy's images
> And grows to something of great constancy.
> (V.i.23-26)

The "story of the night," as we have witnessed it, is a mythical story of the transforming power of imagination: as part of Shakespeare's myth, the story tells us that love and art transcend cool reason. We have seen in the previous two chapters how the imagination creates "something of great constancy" out of chaos, how the play moves toward a proportionate and harmonious conclusion. In the play within the play Shakespeare denies the efficacy of the myth of the imagination, but in the end he returns to the positive aspect of the myth by having the fairies, the embodiments of imagination, occupy the very house of the man who "never may believe / These antique fables nor these fairy toys" (V.i.2-3). And there is a note of supernatural power in Puck's "Now the hungry lion roars" speech:

> Now it is the time of night
> That the graves, all gaping wide,
> Everyone lets forth its sprite,
> In the churchway paths to glide.
> (V.i.386-389)[10]

Nevertheless, the positive part of the myth, imagination as transcendence, is not wholly restored by the return of the fairies. Puck's epilogue emphasizes this point:

If we shadows have offended,
Think you this, and all is mended;
That you have but slumb'red here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend;
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call:
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.
(V.i.430-445)

The whole play, has, after all, been a convincing illusion. The actor who plays Bottom must be very skillful to portray Bottom as an actor who cannot act; the play within the play is part of a successful larger illusion even though it portrays the failure of illusion. This is the offense that Puck is talking about: the effrontery of the imagination in making a second nature that is superior to real life in its form and significance, the masterful production of a design that is really a mere "lie." The real life audience has been included in the "lie" through participation in the transcendence of play, its escape into unreality. A Midsummer Night's Dream seems to have been presented at some aristocratic marriage--perhaps that of Shakespeare's patron Southampton or the Earl of Derby[11]--and James Calderwood's speculation that members of the audience participated in the dance which Oberon announces at the end, and that the fairies left the stage to pass through the chambers of the manor house that served as

Shakespeare's temporary stage, is quite plausible. "The fictional blessing would thus pass uninterruptedly into an actual blessing in which the 'field-dew' of artistic illusion consecrates reality."[12] Such participation, like the presence of a stage audience in the play within the play, allows the audience to invite itself into the illusion quite consciously. A secular ritual of communion occurs, in which the audience is permitted to remember the story of the night through its parody in the craftsmen's play, and to remember also that artistic illusion, while it may consecrate reality, is not identifiable with reality.

There is, then, the initial communion: everyone has had the same dream of chaos turning into constancy; and a secondary communion: everyone knows that the dream is not real, and all indicate this communal knowledge, the actors by asking for applause, and the audience by giving it. "Give me your hands," says Puck in a phrase that simultaneously requests the approval of illusion and the breaking of it. In both senses there is the meaning of <u>communitas</u>, the first emerging from the common escape from life--mortality--and the second from the common assent given to the return to the changing, imperfect, mortal existence which all share. And even here artistic illusion filters into reality in the faint suggestion that the real-life audience, like the stage audience, is a shadow, and that life, like the play, is a dream. The

myth of the imagination remains stubbornly ambivalent: the audience is metamorphosed into transcendence and yet it continues unchanged in corruption; imagination is both powerful and weak.

The Tempest

In A Midsummer Night's Dream Shakespeare shows a mastery of the romance comedy form, superior to what he had done in earlier efforts like Love's Labour's Lost or The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Perhaps this mastery is reflected in the myth of the imagination; the poet is confident enough in his art to mock it at the same time as he demonstrates its power. He laughs, too, at the fairy creatures who embody the meaning of his myth; the myth itself is not put forward very seriously, and the religious reverence that accompanies believed myth is present here in allusions rather than directly.

By 1611, after some fifteen years of prodigious writing, including the great tragedies, Shakespeare's tone has changed. In The Tempest he again presents fairy-spirits on stage, but with perfect solemnity; the myth is presented as valid in its own right. What happens in The Tempest is similar to what Francis Fergusson says happens in The Divine Comedy:

> The process whereby a myth is brought to life in a human imagination corresponds to that by which Christ lives again in the spirits of the faithful, through belief, concentration, love, and an imitative movement of the spirit.[13]

Myth comes to life in a way analogous to the Incarnation,

the metamorphosis of God into man. This does not necessarily mean that the myth must be Christian (though the pattern of loss and redemption in The Tempest has unmistakable Christian affinities): but that, whatever its content, it is believed, and that this belief is a movement, a transformation of the believer. It is "through belief, concentration, love, and an imitative movement of the spirit" that some characters in The Tempest are transformed by one controlling imagination. The myth of the imagination approaches the solemnity of religion and may even be a kind of substitute for religion, though finally it is not. G. Wilson Knight has called Shakespeare's last plays "myths of immortality,"[14] but The Tempest, at least, does not wholly support such a claim; it might with equal validity be called a myth of mortality or "a great Renaissance tragedy of lost [humanist] illusions."[15]

In Act IV of The Tempest Prospero summons Ariel to present "some vanity of mine art" (IV.i.41) for the entertainment of Ferdinand and Miranda. Ariel and the lesser spirits under his command are, like the fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream, representations of the imagination; but whereas the fairies were perfectly free, Ariel is a slave; he is the imaginative faculty under strict rational control. Here he presents a masque in which his fellows transform themselves into likenesses of the Greek deities Iris, Ceres and Juno. In poetry and song these "deities" give their blessing of fertility and

joy to the young couple, though erotic passion is specifically excluded. Venus and Cupid, who had thought "to have done / Some wanton charm upon this man and maid" (IV.i.94-95) have been thwarted by Iris. It was Venus and Cupid who caused Ceres' daughter Persephone to be condemned to the company of "dusky Dis": the association of erotic love with mortality and corruption (like the one Spenser makes in having Life represented by Cupid in Mutabilitie's pageant) makes Love's exclusion necessary. For the masque-world is a vision of a Golden Age in which time--and therefore death and corruption--does not exist; thus Juno and Ceres sing: "Spring come to you at the farthest / In the very end of harvest!" (IV.i.113-114). Ferdinand, properly awed, exclaims: "So rare a wond'red father and a wise / Makes this place Paradise" (IV.i.123-124).

The masque continues with a graceful dance of Naiads and Reapers, "temperate nymphs" (132) and "sunburn'd sicklemen" (134), "towards the end whereof Prospero starts suddenly and speaks; after which, to a strange, hollow, and confused noise, they heavily vanish" (IV.i. s.d.). The Reapers suggest the fullness of harvest--but also, perhaps, the grim reaper, Death. Et In Arcadia, Ego.

As in A Midsummer Night's Dream, the play within the play is a comment on the creations of the imagination, and on the larger play. The masque is a stylized, curiously disembodied production presenting a paradisical

world in which all things typically human--passion, individuality, death--are missing. There is a kind of pastoral perfection in which nature is entirely circumscribed by art, and the effect is like that of a pleasant dream unruffled by passions, rather ornamental, rather inhuman. All of it, for Prospero, is the enactment of "my present fancies" (IV.i.122).

In The Tempest as a whole, the symmetrical perfection achieved in the masque through music and dance is also attempted; the events of the play are also influenced by Prospero's "fancy"--but are limited by certain recalcitrant realities. As long as Prospero has his magic--that is, until the very end of the play--everything that happens is under his direction; frequently, invisible like Oberon, he stands above and watches. Almost all that happens on the island is Prospero's play within the play, as D. G. James says, Prospero's dream.[16] This dream-like innerness is appropriate to a play that is a self-consciously artful wish-fulfillment that comments on art and life. The masque is a vision of an ideal world just as its producer would have it be; the play as a whole aspires to a harmonious world without evil, but falls short. The fundamental reason for the interruption of the masque is not Prospero's suddenly remembered fear that Caliban and his co-conspirators would kill him--as is illustrated by the ease with which he prevents the attempted murder--but rather the sudden awareness of the

limitations of his magic:

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> (IV.i.148-158)

Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream promises at the beginning that he will marry Hippolyta "[w]ith pomp, with triumph, and with revelling" (I.i.19), and so he does; but Prospero proclaims the end of revelling--the comedy is over. Prospero is struck by the ethereality of his pageant; inevitably he must realize that his whole project is similarly ethereal, for it is the same magic that produces both. This realization extends to the universe itself, and here as elsewhere in Shakespeare the "world is a stage" metaphor points to the vanity of life, implying a double devaluation of both art and life. Prospero, who has dreamed a world on the island, finds that all existence has taken on the quality of dream, that life has become as baseless and insubstantial as art. Yet this speech is not bitter, like Macbeth's comparison of life to a poor player; Prospero's tone is closer to awe, and is inconclusive: the world and everyone in it, surely, will end, but the "sleep" that follows may be peaceful. Prospero's insight here is into a transformation that is

greater than any of his, the metamorphosis of everything into nothing. Words like "melted," "dissolve," and "faded" have a gentleness that corresponds to the sea-change in Ariel's song, which also contains the word "fade."

But the measured calmness of this speech is parenthetically placed within Prospero's strange anger. Ferdinand says, "This is strange. Your father's in some passion / That works him strongly," and Miranda confirms this judgment: "Never till this day / Saw I him touch'd with anger so distemper'd" (IV.i.143-145). "Distemper'd" is a striking term in a play whose title is The Tempest and whose protagonist is almost obsessed with the ideal of temperence, i.e., the balancing of the four humours. Prospero, through his art, tempers those in the court party who are malleable enough. The tempest he conjures up is the most literal image of this process by which the roughness of human nature must be counteracted, even beaten into proper form, by rough magic. But in the play's title is the strong implication that a calm is not permanently reached, that the tempest, although it is Prospero's created illusion, lingers on as some reality greater even than Prospero, and working upon him. He, too, is made mad:

> Sir, I am vex'd.
> Bear with my weakness. My old brain is troubled.
> Be not disturb'd with my infirmity.
> If you be pleas'd, retire into my cell
> And there repose. A turn or two I'll walk
> To still my beating mind.
> (IV.i.158-163)

Vexation, weakness, trouble, disturbance, infirmity--Prospero's state of mind is ambivalent, part rage, part humility. The rage is directed against Caliban, "on whom my pains / Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost!" (IV.i.189-190)--Caliban is chaos that is unmalleable, refusing to be transformed. He is the living image of the limitations of Prospero's art. In the face of such limitation Prospero is also humble; he had thought that his mind was as powerful as wish or fancy, which in a sense it is, but it is also as weak as his body.

Prospero's art is dependent on his books, it is mental. And while he seeks to create balance through his art, he is plagued always by one severe imbalance: his lack of a body. He fails to see that he is a body as well as a mind, that the functions and pleasures of sentient physicality are irreplaceable parts of the whole man. His early irascibility, his vexation and sense of weakness after the interruption of the masque, are signs of his body's claim to recognition; even the phrase "beating mind" combines heart and brain.[17] The providence that Prospero has given homage as the agent which brought himself and his daughter to safety (I.ii.159) apparently has decreed that he shall become flawed and weak, abandon his magic, so that his project--which becomes more than just his project, since it envelops him--might succeed. Prospero's inner tempest is the transforming

power of providence at work, changing him from demigod to human being.

There is a certain despair in Prospero's decision to become human, because this means he must somehow come to terms with his own grossness and deformity, represented by Caliban. He must admit ugliness into the ideal of beauty. For a moment his rage is directed outward; he determines to torture Caliban and Stephano and Trinculo, and he evidently still plans some revenge on the courtier whom he holds in enthrallment; but he is persuaded against this by Ariel and his own "nobler reason" (V.i.26). He allows his mind a last indulgence in a recitation of the wonders that his "so potent art" (V.i.50) has enabled him to perform. But then he resolves to

> break my staff,
> Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> I'll drown my book.
> (V.i.54-57)

Prospero's sense of loss is great, equivalent even to Alonso's grief when he supposes Ferdinand drowned and resolves to "seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded" (III.iii.101). In giving up his art Prospero gives up his dream of immortality.

But there are compensations: gaining a body means acknowledging Caliban but it also makes possible communion with humanity; Prospero's first action in reconciling himself with his former enemies is to embrace

Alonso:

> For more assurance that a living prince
> Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body,
> And to thee and thy company I bid
> A hearty welcome.
>
> (V.i.108-111)

"Thy pulse / Beats," responds Alonso, "as of flesh and blood" (V.i.114).[18] This is a resurrection scene in which Prospero is born anew into the company of fellow mortals. His gain is epitomized in the heart-image; the heart being the seat of the emotions and a symbol of mind-body unity. Out of the heart, too, flows compassion, such as Miranda has, and it is a word frequently associated with her, especially in Act I. Thus Prospero's "heartiness" signifies the presence of innocent love in him for the first time in the play--though his bitter "forgiveness" of Antonio and Sebastian shows that he is never wholly given over to compassion.

Prospero's sense of gain in becoming human is balanced by his sense of loss. "[T]his thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine," he says (V.i.276-277) with reference to Caliban; and again, he anticipates that he will "retire" to Milan, "where / Every third thought shall be my grave (V.i.310-311). Deformity and death mar the intended symmetry of the play's conclusion; if there is transcendence, it is only partial.

As a drama of the myth of the imagination, The Tempest, like A Midsummer Night's Dream, says that love

and art change everything, and change nothing. Alonso and Prospero are existential metaphors, transformed by art and love, but they are still only human. The "holiness" of the play-world does not leave the profanity of time and history behind. The myth has indeed come alive, analogously to the Incarnation, but it can only play at redemption.

The new social reality brought about at the end of the play is posed against Prospero's vision of the end of all reality, in both play and life. Shakespeare seeks to resolve this tension with an epilogue, in which the speaker (Prospero) has one foot in reality and one still in illusion; the actor who gives the epilogue is explicitly both actor and character, and his stress in both roles is upon communitas, the strength of social reality as opposed to the insubstantiality of subjective illusion.

> Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
> And what strength I have's mine own,
> Which is most faint. Now 'tis true
> I must be here confin'd by you,
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got
> And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell;
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant;
> And my ending is despair
> Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself and frees all faults.
> As you from crimes would pardon'd be,

Let your indulgence set me free.
(Ep. 1-20)

To the extent to which the audience has been caught up in the play, we too have dreamed Prospero's dream of the metamorphosis of chaos into constancy, which is also the nightmare of the repetitive madness of history. The "good hands" and "gentle breath" for which Prospero calls are of course the applause and cheering that signal the end of the play and the audience's approval of it. The metamorphosis of plain things and men into wonderful ones is accomplished by the mutual imaginative movements of actors and audience; here the representative of the actors renounces his part in the illusion and asks the audience to do the same, to re-member reality by bodily action. The applause is the simultaneous approval and breaking of the illusion, an exchange of a shadowy kind of communion for another that is substantial, and based upon charity.

Some of the terror in Prospero's "cloud-capp'd towers" speech is still present in the epilogue. His only permanent way out of illusion is through communion with the audience, and not only with the other characters in the play, who are themselves only shadows. It is the audience's "spell"--their imaginative consent--that sustains the illusion now that Prospero has given up his art. He is a creation of their minds; the return to Naples symbolizes the return to historical reality and

mortality, and this can only happen if the audience stops imagining and absorbs the actor who plays Prospero into reality. The actor, of course, speaks for his fellows and the playwright as well.

The greatest freedom is not in the wondrous journeys of the imagination but in community. The myth of the imagination is not refuted by the epilogue, but its limitations are shown; to be left in the realm of imagination only is to be stranded in despair on a bare, uninhabited island--or, like Richard II, in a prison populated only with one's own thoughts. The metamorphic design that changes chaos to harmony temporarily translates the audience, but this transcendence is a kind of lie, and ordinary life in human community, however inconstant and incomprehensible it may be, is a greater reality than the coherent, significant one of the play. The poet is not God.

Spenser, Montaigne, Cervantes

Spenser is a Christian poet. His imaginative constructs are not so much attempts to make an ordered world amidst disorder as they are imitations of a higher divine order. He has no myth of the imagination which says that man can be transported through play; for him transcendence is possible only through God's working. Poetry can teach a divine lesson more effectively because of its beauty, but earthly beauty, the products of the imagination, can on its own merit provide no alternative

to the problem of mutability or chaos.

Montaigne is a destroyer of myths, a kind of sophisticated Bottom, who knows that "reason and love keep little company together now-a-days" (A.M.N.D. III. i.147-148). He repeatedly denies the possibility for any kind of transcendence, be it through poetry or religious ecstasy: if the world is inconstant, the only sensible response is an acknowledgement of this, not an attempt to reform it.

Cervantes, like Shakespeare, makes a myth of the imagination, although the transforming agents are not art and love, except indirectly through the influence of the romances which Don Quixote reads. Mainly the world is transformed by Don Quixote's primary imagination. Cervantes, like Shakespeare, accomplishes a kind of transcendence through Don Quixote's playing at chivalry, but always reminds the reader that the physical world, especially the lean and ugly body of Don Quixote himself, contradicts the knight's vision. Don Quixote's yielding up of his illusion is equivalent to Prospero's giving up of his art; in both cases there is a sense of loss and impending or actual death which borders on the tragic. The body claims its due; the imagination is insufficient as a way to immortality. Don Quixote receives the last sacraments, and so Cervantes answers chaos, finally, with the orthodox Christian reply, as even Montaigne does. Shakespeare does not, unless that reply is implicit in

the idea of grace through membership in the body of human community.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

[1]Maynard Mack, "The World of Hamlet," Yale Review, 41 (1952), p. 502.

[2]Ovid, Ovid's Metamorphoses, trans. Arthur Golding, ed. John F. Nims (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), I.1. All subsequent references to the Metamorphoses will be cited by book and line number directly following the quotation. The Golding translation is used as that most likely to have been read by Shakespeare, though he probably also read Ovid in the original at school.

[3]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 89.

[4]Harold Toliver, Pastoral Forms and Attitudes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) p. 362.

[5]Indeed, Minor White Latham believes that the play helped influence the growing disbelief in fairies in Elizabethan England: "the beginning of their decline as terrible and credible entities took place in the 16th century. This was due, for the most part . . . indirectly to the vogue of fairies in literature and drama, and, directly, to the influence of the race of fairies created by William Shakespeare in A Midsummer Night's Dream." The Elizabethan Fairies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 176.

[6]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy (Cleveland: Meridan Books, 1963), p. 15.

[7]William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, V.i.4-17. All references from Shakespeare in this thesis are from The Complete Works of Shakespeare, ed. G. L. Kittredge (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1936), and will be cited by Act, scene, and line number immediately following the quotation.

CHAPTER II

[1]Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950). See especially the Prologue, "The Enigmatic Elizabethans."

[2]E. M. W. Tillyard, The Elizabethan World Picture (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 27.

[3]C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 354.

[4]Edmund Spenser, "Mutabilitie Cantos" VII.47, in Edmund Spenser: A Selection of His Works, ed. Ian C. Sowton (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1968). All subsequent references to Spenser are from this edition and will be cited by book and line number immediately following the quotation.

[5]Michel de Montaigne, "An Apologie of Raymond Sebond," in The Essayes of Montaigne, trans. John Florio (New York: The Modern Library, n.d.) p. 544. All subsequent references to the Essayes will be from this edition and will be cited by page number immediately following the quotation.

[6]Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance, pp. 319-320.

[7]Phillipians iii.21. I shall use The Geneva Bible (1560; facsim. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) for scriptural references, since this is most likely the one Shakespeare used. See Roland Frye, Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 12.

[8]Miguel de Cervantes, Don Quixote, trans. Walter Starkie (New York: The New American Library, 1964), p. 53. All subsequent references to Cervantes are from this edition and will be cited by page number immediately following the quotation.

CHAPTER III

[1]Richard Cody, The Landscape of the Mind (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 133.

[2]Erwin Panofsky, Studies in Iconology (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 121. Again, a resemblance of Puck, the knavish sprite, with Cupid is indicated by the rest of the quotation: " . . . the familiar Renaissance type of Cupid, the nude 'blind bow-boy,' came into being as a little monster, created for admonitory purposes." Puck's effect on the lovers might well be described as "admonitory."

[3]Jan Kott thinks that these animals "represent abundant sexual potency, and some of them play an important part in sexual demonology." Shakespeare Our Contemporary,

trans. Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 182.

[4]As Kott envisions it: "The frail and sweet Titania drags the monster to bed, almost by force. This is the lover she wanted and dreamed of; only she never wanted to admit it, even to herself. Sleep frees her from her inhibitions. The monstrous ass is being raped by the poetic Titania, while she still keeps chatting about flowers." Shakespeare our Contemporary, p. 183. This view is extreme: Shakespeare, had he intended such an interpretation, would have been more explicit, as he is certainly capable of being. But the main point, that Titania's desire, like the lovers', is neither as pure nor as rational--to use Lysander's word--as she thinks, is supported by the animal images. The ass's head is monstrous, even though we know that Bottom is innocent.

[5]From a more distant perspective, however, it is apparent that "[t]he work begins with order (Act I) . . . and . . . returns to a realization of the charity and cohesive community morality in which it began (Acts IV-V)." Paul A. Olsen, "A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Meaning of Court Marriage," ELH, 24 (1957), p. 101. It should be noted that the charity and cohesive community sense are greater at the end than in the beginning.

[6]Northrop Frye, A Natural Perspective (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 72-73. See for example The Comedy of Errors, As You Like It, Twelfth Night.

[7]Kott expresses this well: "Sebastian wants to murder his king and brother on a desert island. [This is] . . . a disinterested act, pure folly; like the theft of a sack of gold in a desert, among people condemned to die of thirst. . . . The history of mankind is madness, but in order to expose it, one has to act it out on a desert island." Shakespeare our Contemporary, p. 253.

[8]Montaigne, Essayes, p. 725.

[9]Frank Kermode, "Introduction," The Tempest (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1954), p. xlvii.

[10]Rose Zimbardo, "Form and Disorder in The Tempest," Shakespeare Quarterly, XIV (1963), pp. 51-53.

CHAPTER IV

[1]Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 52.

[2]Spenser, "An Hymne in Honour of Love," ll. 190-194.

[3]Harry Levin, The Myth of the Golden Age in the Renaissance (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. xvi.

[4]Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance p. 56. See also Frank Kermode, "The Mature Comedies," in Early Shakespeare, eds. John R. Brown and Bernard Harris (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1961), p. 215. Wind adds: "Among Renaissance theologians it was almost a commonplace to say that the highest mysteries transcend the understanding and must be apprehended through a state of darkness in which the distinctions of logic vanish." Ibid., p. 57.

[5]I Corinthians ii.9-10. The last phrase in the Tyndale Bible reads "the botome of Goddes secretes" (italics mine). See Robert Dent, "Imagination in A Midsummer Night's Dream," in Shakespeare 400, ed. James G. McManaway (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 121.

[6]This idea is expressed by Theseus, of all people: "Love . . . and tongue-tied simplicity / In least speaks most, to my capacity" (V.i.104-105).

[7]But this chaos might be inspired nonsense, alluding to a higher wisdom than reason's, as it is in King Lear:

> Lear. . . . [Y]ou see how this world goes.
>
> Glo. I see it feelingly.
>
> Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how the world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears. See how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief.
> (IV.vi.152-156)

[8]This tension is neatly expressed in the bow and arrow, which "are unquestionably the weapons of Diana--virginis arma, as Virgil says. But they are also the weapons of Cupid. . . . While the arrow flies and hits blindly like passion, the bow, held steadily in its place, is used with a seeing eye; and because its strength resides in its tension, it is a symbol of restraint. A bow without arrow, and an arrow without bow, are clearly of no possible use; but combined they impart energy to each other, and illustrate that 'harmony in discord' which Pico defined as the essence of Pulchritudo [Beauty]. . . . " Ibid., pp. 75-76.

[9]"It is of the essence of love in Shakespeare's later plays, to produce a transforming vision of value;

from the contemplation of the object of admiration (the keynote is reverence rather than desire, though the force of passion is still present in muted form) spring a radiance, a transfiguring light which rests on surrounding objects and confers upon them a distinctive quality, at once remote and clearly realized in the expression, of its own." D. A. Traversi, Shakespeare: the Last Phase (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1953), p. 257.

[10]The full quotation is this: "One must admire Prospero because of his talents and his strength; one cannot possibly like him. He has the coldness of someone who has come to the conclusion that human nature is not worth much, that human relations are, at their best, pretty sorry affairs." W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 129. This is accurate, so far as it goes, but does not take into account Prospero's attempt to regain human warmth, especially in the latter part of the play. All his art is intended to change human nature, implying at least a desire to believe in humanity's worth.

[11]Proteus in The Two Gentlemen of Verona believes love's rhetoric has a transforming power, though Silvia's steadfastness frustrates him: " . . . if the gentle spirit of moving words / Can no way change you to a milder form, / I'll woo you like a soldier . . . " (V.iv.55-57).

CHAPTER V

[1]Hardin Craig, The Enchanted Glass (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), p. 8.

[2]Philip Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 101.

[3]Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1955), p. 61.

[4]Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, p. 100. "Her [nature's] world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden."

[5]The organization is almost mathematical in complexity and exactitude. See Blaze Odell Bonazza, Shakespeare's Early Comedies: A Structural Analysis (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966), p. 104. As if deliberately avoiding over-exactness, however, Shakespeare confuses the time which passes in the play. It could be three days,

or perhaps four.

[6]J. R. Brown, Shakespeare and His Comedies (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 139. The "music of the spheres" belongs rather to the late plays than to the comedies, however. In the last plays divine blessing is invoked to sanctify the harmonious conclusions. "The fingers of the pow'rs above do tune / The harmony of this peace," says the Soothsayer in Cymbeline (V.v.466-467); Pericles, and Thaisa and their daughter Marina have been "[l]ed on by heaven, and crown'd with joy at last" (Per. V.iii.90); The Winter's Tale ends with Hermione's restoration and her invocation: "You gods, look down, / And from your sacred vials pour your graces / Upon my daughter's head:" (V.iii.121-123). There is also, of course, Gonzalo's acknowledgement of the gods' influence in The Tempest.

[7]Enid Welsford, The Court Masque (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927).

[8]Colin Still, Shakespeare's Mystery Play (London: Cecil Palmer, 1921), pp. 33 and 120.

[9]The renewed-clothing/renewed-nature metaphor is frequently repeated. Gonzalo believes that the royal party's "garments are now as fresh as when we put them on first in Afric, at the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis" (II.i.68-71). Here fresh clothing is symbolically linked to the renewed social order which is commonly signified by marriage in Shakespearean comedy--though it is the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, yet to come, which shall actually consecrate the new order. Shakespeare may, like Spenser in the Mutabilitie Cantos, have even been thinking of Christ's shining garments on the mount of Transfiguration.

The clothing metaphor is ironically echoed by Antonio--most of his words and actions are parodies of goodness, associating him with the diabolical--to mean that his usurpation of Prospero's dukedom placed him in his destined social position: " . . . look how well my garments sit upon me, / Much feater than before" (II.i.272-273). Such a negative meaning is also present in Stephano's and Trinculo's conceit that Prospero's wardrobe agrees with their new "kingly" status (IV.i.222ff.). Prospero later makes clear that these rich clothes do not correspond to the real status of the wearers: "Mark but the badges of these men, my lords, / Then say if they be true" (V.i.266-267). In short, where reference to clothing is made, some kind of statement on the nature of the wearer is also being made, and Shakespeare always enables the reader or audience to discern that nature.

[10]Theodore Spencer, Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), p. 195.

[11]Wolfgang Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 189.

[12]See Harold Toliver, Pastoral Forms and Attitudes, p. 98. Also Northrop Frye: "This white magic is contrasted with the black magic of Sycorax, who has the traditional power of witchcraft over the moon, and, like Spenser's Mutability, threatens the whole cosmic order." A Natural Perspective, p. 150.

[13]See Robert Hunter's chapter on The Tempest in Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), especially pp. 233-234. Hunter's thoughts on the psychology of metamorphosis as this takes place through a ritual death and rebirth are similar to my own.

[14]W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand, p. 524.

[15]In this play, tears are always a sign of compassion, and compassion defines humanity at its height. Miranda weeps for the "lost" mariners, Ferdinand for his father, Gonzalo for the charmed court party--and finally, in Act V, Prospero himself is moved to sympathetic tears.

[16]Richard Cody, The Landscape of the Mind, p. 69. Although Cody is not referring directly to "Full fadom five," his comment is apt.

[17]"Thanks to the music, Ferdinand is able to accept the past, symbolized by his father, as past, and at once there stands before him, his future, Miranda." W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand, p. 526.

[18]Robert Langbaum, "Introduction," The Tempest (New York: The New American Library, 1964), pp. xxv-xxvi.

[19]Rose Zimbardo, "Form and Disorder in The Tempest," SQ., p. 51.

CHAPTER VI

[1]William Rossky, "Imagination in the English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic," Studies in the Renaissance, V (1958), p. 50n and p. 53.

[2]C. L. Barber, Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, pp. 139-140. Of the fairies in A Midsummer Night's Dream Barber says: "One might summarize their role by saying they represent the power of imagination."

[3]Northrop Frye, Fables of Identity (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), p. 151.

[4]Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968), p. 32.

[5]Ann Righter, Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 148.

[6]Jackson Cope, "The Rediscovery of Anti-Form in Renaissance Drama," Comparative Drama, I (1967), p. 162. Cope is paraphrasing Ortega y Gasset in Idea of the Theatre, not yet published in English.

[7]Ortega, quoted by Jackson Cope, ibid., p. 163.

[8]Philip Sidney, An Apology for Poetry, p. 103.

[9]Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), pp. 144 and 25.

[10]Elizabeth Sewell has this comment: "at the end . . . Shakespeare--who is beyond question mythologizing in the whole of this play--takes back, as it were, his own mythological material into his own hands and out of those of the 'hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,' and recreates as hieroglyphic and myth and poetry all the elements which the cipher [Bottom, etc.] has annulled. Shakespeare is strong enough to admit a parody of mythology and drama into his own mythological play, and then to restore everything at the end." The Orphic Voice (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 189.

I think this is basically sound, though I do not believe that everything is restored at the end. The mythologizing in A Midsummer Night's Dream does not escape the onslaught of Bottom and company undamaged.

[11]A detailed discussion of this subject may be found in Paul N. Siegel, "A Midsummer Night's Dream and the Wedding Guests," SQ, IV (1953), 139-144.

[12]James Calderwood, Shakespearean Metadrama (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), p. 128.

[13]Francis Fergusson, "'Myth' and Literary Scruple," in Myth and Literature, ed. John Vickery (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 147.

[14]G. Wilson Knight, The Crown of Life (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 30.

[15]Jan Kott, Shakespeare our Contemporary, p. 266.

[16]James says that "we may best render the total

impression it [the play] makes on us by saying that Prospero in truth never left Milan, and that the island and all that we see happen on it was a dream of Prospero's only." The Dream of Prospero (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 149. This reduces the play too much; if it is a dream, other characters and the audience share it. But it is true that Prospero is the first dreamer and events happen much as he wishes them to.

[17]Prospero's phrase is almost exactly that of Miranda earlier in the play, when she asks to be told his reason for raising the storm, "[f]or still 'tis beating in my mind" (I.ii.176). In each case a flood of passion that unites body and mind is indicated.

[18]A similar moment in The Winter's Tale, when the "statue" of Hermione embraces Leontes, evokes the response: "O, she's warm!" (V.iii.109). The greatest and most awe-inspiring magic is that which turns art into life, the inhuman into the human. The body, which may be the typical image of the Renaissance, is essential to this awe--but it must be a living body and not an image.

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